

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE
COLONIAL CLERGY

*Words of the Declaration of Independence
foreseen in the writings of clergymen
prior to July 1776*

by

STEWART M. ROBINSON



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1956

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FOREWORD

The following material is a part of a large body of evidence showing that the clergy of the American Colonies exercised a profound and wholesome effect upon the thinking of their time in many fields besides that of theology. While mainly interested in religious teaching and pastoral care, the clergy in the Colonies were bold to utter a ringing word on public questions.

The two score and more quoted in this study do not include the whole number of those who spoke to the point. Nor, of course, do the minority whose words survive in print or in manuscript make up any large proportion of the total. Probably there were upwards of three thousand ministers in the thirteen colonies in the 1770's. That is to say, one in every thousand among the inhabitants, was a parson.

Printed sermons made one of the popular gifts of the day. Inscriptions on copies still extant, references in correspondence, and notices in newspapers, all testify to the fact that they were freely circulated among the people. The parallelism between the words of the Declaration of Independence and the words of contemporary clergymen is striking, and so far as known, not elsewhere displayed in as great detail as in the following pages.

CHAPTER 1

"Neither Book or Pamphlet"

In June 1776 Thomas Jefferson had upstairs rooms at 700 Market Street, Philadelphia and worked at a desk which he had had made when he came to sit as a member of the Continental Congress.¹ On June 11th he and four others were named by the Congress to "prepare the Declaration" on the text of the Richard Henry Lee Resolution, Number One—to become the classic known as the Declaration of Independence. On June 7th, four days earlier, resolutions in the handwriting of Richard Henry Lee had been offered to the Congress, which were as follows: "Resolved That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances. That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation."² Asked by his colleagues on the committee to draw up a paper setting forth the first resolution, Jefferson went to the task and became the penman of the historic pronouncement finally issued, after debate and revision, on July 4th, 1776.³

In August 1823, Jefferson, recalling the time when he drafted the Declaration of Independence, wrote in a letter to James Madison: "Pickering's observations, and Mr. Adam's in addition, 'that it contained no new ideas, that it is a common place compilation, it's sentiments hacknied in Congress for two years before, and it's essence contained in Otis's pamphlet,' may all be true. of that I am not to be the judge. Richard H. Lee charged it as copied from Locke's treatise on government. Otis's pamphlet I never saw, & whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book or pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether & to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before. had Mr. Adams been so restrained, Congress would have lost the benefit of his bold and impressive advocations of the rights of revolution, for no man's confident & fervid addresses, more than Mr. Adams's encouraged and supported us thro' the difficulties

surrounding us, which, like the ceaseless action of gravity, weighed on us by night and by day. yet, on the same ground, we may ask what of these elevated thoughts was new, or can be affirmed never before to have entered the conceptions of man?"⁴

This testimony written years later in response to other recollections by John Adams and assertions by Timothy Pickering, brings out these facts: (1) he used no books or pamphlets while writing. This was against the assertion that he copied out of Locke and James Otis; (2) he made no effort to compose something new or original, i. e. a treatise on government. Rather he tried to gather up words and sentiments already expressed which seemed to him accurately to dress Resolution One in a suitable garb for public reading and argument. In short, Jefferson tried *not* to be original and he did *not* plagiarize.

During the period May 1774-June 1776, the printed writings of the clergy, leading and reflecting the thought of their people, afford a large number of samples of carefully marshalled political opinion in a vibrant style.⁵ The handy form in which they appeared, more the size of a modern pocket reader than of a book, made them well suited for casual perusal and for distribution. Most were printed in Boston, Philadelphia, or New York.

The first words Jefferson wrote were these: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel to the separation."

The Rev. Jonathan Boucher was a Church of England clergyman in Annapolis, Maryland. He had come to the Colonies in the spring of 1759 at the age of twenty-one and had served several parishes in Virginia and Maryland. In addition to his parochial duties in the church he ran a boys' school to which George Washington sent his step son. During his career in America he often preached sermons on matters of current political topics, none of which was published in America. In 1775, at the age of thirty-seven, he retired to England. Many years later, in 1797, he published his sermons in a volume entitled "A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution" which he dedicated to George Washington, then retired from the Presidency and living at

Mt. Vernon. Washington wrote a polite reply. One copy, which the author gave to Lord Onslow, is now in the possession of the editor, who found only the first dozen pages cut. When the Congress first assembled in September 1774, Boucher had a "Letter from a Virginian" ready, to greet the delegates, in which he gives this prophetic tribute: "You, (members of the Continental Congress) it is true, have not been summoned, or convened, by any formal constitutional authority, or invested with any legislative powers: But you have been chosen as freely as the circumstances of the times would admit; with less cabal and intrigue than is usually employed for a seat in many of our legal provincial Assemblies, and without even the suspicion of venality, which is but too frequently and too generally practiced among us for that purpose. Your persons, characters and principles, are familiarly known to your constituents; you have been recommended by the most honorable of all interests, the general opinion of your knowledge, abilities and virtues. We look upon you as the oracles of our country; your opinions will have the effect of laws, on the minds of the people, and your resolves may decide the fate of America. All orders of men, who enjoy the happiness of living under a free government, may boldly assume the character of politicians; . . . The lowest orders of men in such a country, have an unalienable property in their industry, their liberty, and their lives. . . . they have a right, as freemen, to examine their (Governor's) conduct, to censure, to condemn it; without this right the freest government on earth would soon degenerate into the rankest tyranny. The great out-lines, the fundamental principles of our constitution, are within the reach of almost any man's capacity . . ."¹⁶

Nothing could have been better calculated to give to the members of Congress more of a sense of dignity and of mission. This was to remain the atmosphere for the months that followed.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." So wrote Jefferson.

The Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon (b. 1728) came from Scotland to the Presidency of the College of New Jersey in 1768. He once declared that he had never preached but two political sermons from his pulpit—one on May 17, 1776 in Princeton, the other preached at the "Peace" in 1783,

also in Princeton. His political writings however are numerous. He wrote in *The Pennsylvania Magazine* under the pen name "The Druid". The June, 1776 issue contained this: "The natural rights of mankind, and the cause of liberty in general, have been explained and defended in innumerable treatises, ancient and modern. The application of these principles to the American controversy, has been made by many writers, with the greatest clearness and precision."⁷

In 1717 the Rev. John Wise (*aet.* 65) wrote a treatise on church and civil government. It was reprinted in 1772 with a long list of New England leaders as subscribers. Wise said in his day: "The end of all good Government is to Cultivate Humanity, Promote the happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate Honour &c. without injury or abuse of any."⁸ Moses Coit Tyler said of Wise: "In the earlier years of the 18th Century he announced the political ideas, that fifty years later took immortal form under the hand of Thomas Jefferson." And, "no wonder that the writer of that sentence was called up from the grave by the men who were getting ready the Declaration of Independence."⁹ A year before, 1775, the Rev. John Carmichael (*aet.* 47) delivered a sermon at Lancaster in which he asserted: "Man is blest with reason to direct his enquiries in search of happiness. His maker God allows him to seek to be as happy as he possibly can, both in this life and the life to come."¹⁰

Jefferson wrote in the upper room of Graff's house: "That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." He was following, knowingly or not, Witherspoon's dictum in the April number of *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, in which a report was given of a "Dialogue on Civil Liberty" at Nassau-Hall, the previous January. "Men, as we have been taught and as I firmly believe, are born free and equal. All society is founded on consent of compact, expressed or implied. And, therefore, for any man, or body of men, to usurp dominion over others, and reduce them to a state of dependence on absolute will, is a perversion of the order of providence, and high treason against the majesty of human nature."¹¹ He also had statements of the clergy from Hartford and Philadelphia to justify his thesis. Samuel Lockwood (*aet.* 53), in a sermon before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, May 12, 1774 said: "As all are born free, therefore antecedent to all combination, no one has

an inherent independent, underived power and right of dominion over his neighbour."¹²

Jacob Duché (*aet.* 38), was a native of Philadelphia, a member of the first class of the University of Pennsylvania, and Chaplain to the Continental Congress. He is remembered for the letter he wrote Washington after the British took Philadelphia in the autumn of 1777, wherein he urged an accommodation with Great Britain and the repudiation of Independence. In July, 1775, preaching to the First Battalion of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia, he stated: ". . . our best writers, moral and political, as well clergy as laity, have asserted, that true government can have no other foundation than common consent. . . . whenever these rulers abuse their sacred trust, by unrighteous attempts to injure, oppress and enslave those persons from whom alone, under God, their power is derived, does not humanity, does not reason, does not Scripture, call upon the man, the citizen, the Christian . . . 'to stand fast in that liberty, wherewith Christ . . . hath made them free' . . . I trust it will be no difficult matter to satisfy your consciences with respect to the righteousness of the cause in which you are now engaged."¹³

John Lathrop and Dan Foster, and others, had laid down the principle of resistance months before Jefferson wrote: "That when ever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter, or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." Lathrop (*aet.* 35), preached a ringing sermon "Innocent Blood Crying to God", on the Sunday after the Boston Massacre. He spoke to the Boston Artillery Company in the following words: "It is an undoubted truth that the laws of every well constituted society, nation, or state, are above Kings, and are designed to hold them in subjection as well as the people. Treason and rebellion therefore may be considered as acts of Violence against the original compact, the constitution and laws of society, whether the persons guilty be rulers or subjects."¹⁴ Foster's beliefs (*aet.* 26), were similar: "To prove that the people have right and authority to dethrone their king and put down all other civil officers and rulers, of subordinate degree, whenever they shall counteract their obligations and cease to answer the ends of their constitution and appointment to places of civil trust and power. This

is a proposition, the truth of which is very easily proved and made evident."¹⁵

Jefferson must often have stopped to look out upon the throng passing in Market Street, or making its way through Seventh toward Chestnut and the State House so short a distance from where he sat. This statement he was preparing must fulfill not only the hopes of the friends of Independence, daily growing in number, but also be a reasonable answer to its foes, a very influential company. Copies of "The Querist" were being circulated in many editions. The tenth edition, used by the editor, bears the notation: "This pamphlet, on the 8th Day of September last, [i. e. 1774] was, in full Conclave of the Sons of Liberty in New-York, committed to the flames by the Hands of their Common Executioner; as it contains some Queries they cannot, and others they will not answer."¹⁶ Its author, Dr. Chandler (*aet.* 48), a steady foe to independence, an Anglican clergyman of conspicuous influence, though fled to England when Jefferson was writing, had, nevertheless proposed questions which required careful answers. Chandler had asked: "Whether any direct evidence has hitherto appeared in favour of the exemption for which the colonies contend; and whether it does not concern the managers of their cause, previously to any other steps, to produce such evidence in support of their claim?"¹⁷ Jefferson dipped his pen and continued: "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience has shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed."

As far back as May 25, 1774, the Rev. Gad Hitchcock (*aet.* 55) had addressed Governor Gage in Boston on the occasion of the Annual Election ceremony, the last ever held under the royal regime, with these bold words: "If it be true that no rulers can be safe, where the doctrine of resistance is taught; it must be true that no nation can be safe where the contrary is taught: If it be true that this disposeth men of turbulent spirits to oppose the best rulers, it is true that the other disposeth princes of evil minds, to enslave and ruin the best and most submissive subjects: If it be true that this encourageth all public disturbance, and all revolutions whatsoever; it is as true that the other encourageth all tyranny, and all the most intolerable persecutions and oppressions imaginable."¹⁸

July 10, 1775 brought from the press in Philadelphia a statement written by four Presbyterian clergymen, sent particularly to their co-religionists in North Carolina, but intended for all, which ran in part as follows: "But it is said that the Parliament of England has supreme power, that no one ought to resist. This we allow, while they make acts that are reasonable, and according to the British constitution: but their power has bounds and limits that they must not exceed; they are limited by the laws of God and of reason; they are limited by the fundamental Laws of the Constitution, and by the Great Charter of England."¹⁹

While "prudence dictated," a "long train of abuses" cried aloud and Jefferson wrote: "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain, is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States." Enoch Huntington (*aet.* 40) of Middletown, Connecticut might have been standing by his shoulder repeating his words of July 20, 1775 on "the day appointed by the Continental Congress as a day of public humiliation, fasting and prayer in all the English colonies on this Continent". Huntington had said: "We see, for a course of years, a long series of plans and schemes of subtle statesmen, and parliamentary debates, and acts, and resolutions, under ministerial influence, all evidently calculated to subjugate this country. And if there hath been a change of ministers there hath been no essential change in measures; the conduct of the administration hath continually tended to this point. And it is a task not easily performed, even to mention all the wicked arts and measures that have been employed to accomplish it. The British constitution, heretofore, so much the glory and happiness of our own nation, and the envy and terror of foreigners, has from time to time been undermined, till at length, under the hands of bribery and corruption, it seems rotten to the very core. Royal charters, and the most valuable and essential rights of Englishmen, have been unjustly and cruelly wrested away, or most wantonly violated and sported with."²⁰

On January 17, 1776 Andrew Lee (*aet.* 31), headed a Fast Day Sermon at Norwich Connecticut by quoting from the sermon of the Rev. Charles Nisbet of Montrose, Scotland, preached before their General Assembly. "It is not to be wondered at," [i. e. that some of our real Friends, are helpful to our Enemies.] "Few have ever been betrayed, except by their Friends. I have done my Duty in warning you of your Danger: It remains that you do your Duty, by defending yourselves to the utmost. If you can stand tamely by, while your Enemies are so busy, you will fall despised and unpitied, as your Ruin will be of yourselves." Nisbet represented an influential section of Presbyterian Scotland which was cold to the government. He later came to Pennsylvania and was the first president of Dickinson College. He once preached so warmly for the Americans that members of the town council rose and withdrew, whereupon the preacher remarked "the wicked flee when no man pursueth".

In this sermon Lee said of the clergy: ". . . as matters of a political nature are to be found in the word of God, to discourse upon them is sometimes their duty—and it is especially so at this day, in which we are called to contend for our civil rights—It is now their duty faithfully to warn their hearers of their danger, and seriously caution them, to beware of every thing that may be prejudicial to their country's cause.—

"The clergy in general may do much in this way to serve their country, as well as by their prayers—The author of the following pages, herein attempts to cast in his mite, to help on the good cause; which he is resolved to do all the little in his power to assist.

"He has used plainness that will doubtless offend the enemies of American liberty, and perhaps some of those who have inconsiderately acted against her clearest interests—He could not express himself with the unfeeling coldness of a stoic, upon matters so important to mankind; in which also his country is so nearly concerned, nor would he if he could."²¹

Samuel Sherwood (*aet.* 46) on the same Fast Day, January 17, 1776, reminded his hearers that when he used the word "church" he wished it understood in the general sense of all Christians and meant in no way to discriminate one band from another, for he said: "He fully believes the Apostle, when he says, 'where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' and doubts not, but this spirit has been plentifully poured out, not only

in the New-England colonies, but likewise on his Episcopalian brethren in the Southern provinces, for whom he has the highest esteem and affection, and would not for his right hand, speak or write any thing that might give umbrage or just cause of offence to such worthy patriots, so ardently engaged in the common cause, and using such vigorous, spirited exertions for the defence and preservation of American liberty. —He is fully convinced of the absolute importance of uniting in the most cordial friendship, as Christian brethren and fellow-countrymen, in this glorious contest and struggle, and fully sensible, that to give the ark a wrong touch in this critical moment, might be of unspeakably dangerous consequence—”

Sherwood called his sermon “*The Church’s Flight into the Wilderness*” [text: Revelation 12:14-17] and developed from Scripture and history the suggestion that: “This American quarter of the globe seemed to be reserved in providence, as a fixed and settled habitation for God’s church, where she might have property of her own, and the right of rule and government, so as not to be controul’d and oppress’d in her civil and religious liberties, by the tyrannical and persecuting powers of the earth, represented by the great red dragon. The church never before this, had prime occupancy, or first possession of any part of this terraqueous globe, in any great extent of territory. In all countries and kingdoms wherever Christianity had been planted, before its introduction into this American wilderness, the ruling powers in possession of the property, and right of jurisdiction and dominion, were in opposition to this benevolent institution; and the church had to make her way through the greatest possible difficulties and dangers. While thus in an enemy’s land, her persecutions and oppressions, her bloody trials and sufferings furnish out the chief subject of her history from her beginning to the present day, in other parts of the world, from which she is not wholly exempted in this. However, her degree of peace and quiet rest has been greater than she has ever known since she has had existence and being. When that God, to whom the earth belongs, and the fulness thereof, brought his church into this wilderness, as on eagles wings, by his kind, protecting providence, he gave this good land to her, to be her own lot and inheritance for ever.”²² Attentive Bible readers, and the colonies were full of them, had an acute sense of Divine calling. The century before 1776 had been a period when the churches had been amazingly free to live their own lives. True, there were restrictions and some sharp

episodes where public authority was invoked for or against a body of believers. But the atmosphere was on the whole favorable.

The members of the Continental Congress were familiar with the church practice of carefully preparing papers to sustain the convictions moving men's minds. A sense of religious duty prompted them to produce a paper for all men to read, which could gather together the testimony to which their minds consented. The "howling wilderness" of their earlier days was truly in 1776 a delightful land, with opulent towns, several colleges, pleasant homes, and vast resources, most notably room to roam and "the west" to settle. Here people could truly plan their civic and commercial life close to the principles of revealed religion.

On the same July 4th, 1776, before the day's work was ended, as though enough had not been done, Congress appointed three of the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams, "to bring in a device for a seal for the United States of America". August 17, 1776, after the Articles of Confederation were entered, the Committee's report on a seal is to be found in the Journal of the Continental Congress. It is characteristic of the background of the times that Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, and Du Simitiere, a French artist in Philadelphia who made a sketch for the committee, incorporated into the seal such elements as the Eye of Providence as a crest. Franklin suggested Moses standing on the shore with hand raised over the sea, Jefferson proposed the Children of Israel in the Wilderness.²³

Jefferson may have heard the story of John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (*aet.* 30), of Woodstock, Virginia who left his congregation amid a fanfare of patriotic fervor, to lead the men of the parish to the nation's defense. Muhlenberg had been ordained in England by the Bishop of London in 1772; with him was William White, later made a bishop. The two young men also had the opportunity to see Garrick on the stage. Before his flock Muhlenberg debated the issues of the times and in January 1776 expressed his decision to fight by saying: "In the language of Holy Writ there is a time for all things, a time to preach and a time to pray, but those times have passed away. There is a time to fight, and that time has now come."²⁴ At this time he had a letter from his brother reproving the disorder of his thoughts: "Doubtless your martial soul, as you wrote, was occupied with marching, advancing perhaps, also review.

"Your brother [i. e. the writer, F. A. Muhlenberg] . . . is concerned that you engrossed yourself only too much, in things which did not become you as a preacher, and were absolutely no part of your office—you unfortunately, like many of our Whigs, sputter with improper heat over things without any consideration—you seized upon the opportunity to lay upon me the insulting designation of a Tory—Brother! Brother! the rough soldier really already appears from behind the black gown."²⁵

Another influence at work on Congress was the hardness of the first winter of the War reflected in a letter from the Rev. Nathaniel Eells (*aet.* 66), serving two regiments at Roxbury, to the Rev. J. Fish, written February 8, 1776, in which he relates the routine of camp life, the bad news, the need for supplies.²⁶

On April 19, 1776 Jonas Clark (*aet.* 46), preached the first anniversary sermon at Lexington, recalling what he had seen a year before. It was published in Boston and brought to the audience a recital of events which were shaping the face of things to come. "At the close of the last war, we arrived at that happy period, to which our ancestors looked, with earnest expectation as the utmost of their wishes, as the answer of their prayers, and the reward of all their toils and sufferings. The savages were subdued, those restless neighbours, the French were subjected and this wide extended continent seemed to be given us for a possession: And we were ready to say, 'there was none to make us afraid.'—But how uncertain the most blooming prospects?—How vain—how disappointing the most rational, as well as raised expectations, in this imperfect state?—Scarcely emerged from the dangers and fatigues of a long and distressing war, we are unexpectedly involved in perplexities and anxieties of a different kind, which by degrees have increased, 'till they are become more serious, dangerous and distressing, than ever yet felt, by God's people, in this once happy land.

"Through the crafty insinuations, false representations and diabolical counsels, of the enemies of God's people and the common rights of mankind, in America and Britain, acts of oppression are made by the Parliament of England, in which we are not represented, which deeply affect our most valuable privileges. In open violation of our chartered rights, these acts of unrighteousness and oppression, are attempted to be carried into execution, in these colonies. After various threats of coercive measures, a military force is sent to enforce them. An innocent, loyal people

are distressed, and every art, which wit or malice could invent, is used to flatter or fright, to divide or dishearten, and finally subject us to the will of a power, not known in our charters, or even in the British constitution itself. And as one of the natural consequences of standing armies being stationed in populous cities, for such execrable purposes, many of the inhabitants of Boston are insulted. At length, under pretence of ill-treatment, the streets of that once flourishing city, are stained with the innocent blood of a number of our brethren, wantonly or cruelly slain, by those sons of oppression and violence!

“Upon the high resentments of the people, in consequence of this horrid outrage and violence, there was, for a short time, a pause in their measures.—For a moment the oppressors themselves seemed to be struck with the horrid effects of their own iniquitous proceedings, and stand aghast at the sight of the innocent blood they had shed! Perhaps they were not, at that time, so thoroughly hardened in sin as they have proved themselves since!—But this pause seemed to be, not to repent of their evil deeds, but rather to collect themselves, and devise some measures more effectual: For so far from giving over the execrable design, the plan of oppression is renewed. New acts are passed to distress and enslave us. The lust of domination appears no longer in disguise, but with open face—The starving Port-Bill comes forth—Gage arrives with his forces by sea and land, to carry it into execution, with vigour and severity.—And to compleat the scene, and at once, to make thorough work of oppression and tyranny, immediately follow the Bills, that subvert the constitution, vacate our charter, abridge us of the right of trial by juries of the vicinity, in divers specified capital cases, and expose us to be seized, contrary to the laws of the land, and carried to England to be tried for our lives!—As also the Bill for establishing the popish religion in Canada, contrary to the faith of the crown and the statutes of the kingdom.

“Add to these things, the people are treated, in various instances, with indignity, severity and even cruelty. And notwithstanding every possible expression of a peaceful disposition, in this people, consistent with a determined resolution and Christian firmness, in defence of their rights and liberties, which they held dearer than life, their property is frequently and violently seized, and even their persons and lives are threatened. The inhabitants of Salem are threatened with the sword, for peacefully meeting to consult upon matters of importance to them—

selves and the public, as they had an undoubted right to do, by the standing laws of the colony. A number of the most respectable inhabitants of that town, were arrested and threatened with imprisonment, by General Gage's order, for calling the inhabitants together, at the meeting aforesaid. The province stores of powder, which were deposited at Medford were also clandestinely seized, by a large detachment of the troops, and conveyed with all possible dispatch, to Boston; as were, at the same time, also, some field-pieces at Cambridge. Intrenchments are thrown up, by Gage's army, and the town of Boston becomes a garrison, and the inhabitants become prisoners, at the pleasure of the troops. And notwithstanding Gage's repeated professions, of having no design against the lives, or liberties, of the people, every thing hath the appearance of hostile intention, and of the near approach of blood shed and war.

"Many inhabitants both of the town and country, are daily abused and insulted, by the troops. The devotion of God's people, in their worshipping assemblies, is frequently interrupted, and marks of the utmost contempt are cast upon religion itself. Bodies of troops from time to time march into the country, with a view (as was supposed) to alarm, terrify, or awe the inhabitants to a submission. On the Sabbath, a day held sacred to God and religion, by christians, while God's people were in his house, engaged in devotion and the instituted services of religion, a detachment of these instruments of tyranny and oppression, clandestinely landed at Marblehead, and making a quick march to Salem, attempt to seize upon some cannon and other military stores deposited there to be ready for use, if wanted upon any important emergency:—But, happily, they are disappointed in their designs, by the spirit and resolution of the inhabitants, who speedily collected upon that alarming occasion.

"At length on the night of the eighteenth of April, 1775, the alarm is given of the hostile designs of the troops. The militia of this town are called together, to consult and prepare for whatever might be necessary, or in their power, for their own, and the common safety; though without the least design of commencing hostilities, upon these avowed enemies and oppressors of their country. In the mean time, under cover of the darkness, a brigade of these instruments of violence and tyranny, make their approach, and with a quick and silent march, on the morning of the nineteenth, they enter this town. And this is the place where the fatal scene begins!—They approach with the morning' light; and more

like murderers and cut-throats, than the troops of a christian king, without provocation, without warning, when no war was proclaimed, they draw the sword of violence, upon the inhabitants of this town, and with a cruelty and barbarity, which would have made the most hardened savage blush, they shed INNOCENT BLOOD!—But, O my GOD!—! How shall I speak!—or how describe the distress, the horror of that awful morn, that gloomy day!—Yonder field can witness the innocent blood of our brethren slain!—And from thence does their blood cry unto God for vengeance from the ground!—There the tender father bled, and there the beloved son!—There the hoary head, and there the blooming youth!—And there the man in his full strength, with the man of years!—They bleed—they die, not by the sword of an open enemy (with whom war is proclaimed) in the field of battle; but by the hand of those that delight in spoil, and lurk privily that they may shed innocent blood!—But they bleed, they die, not in their own cause only; but in the cause of this whole people—in the cause of God, their country and posterity. —And they have not bled, they shall not bleed in vain.—Surely there is one that avengeth, and that will plead the cause of the injured and oppressed; and in his own way and time, will both cleanse and avenge their innocent blood.—And the names of Munroe, Parker, and others, that fell victims to the rage of blood-thirsty oppressors, on that gloomy morning, shall be had in grateful remembrance, by the people of this land, and transmitted to posterity, with honour and respect, throughout all generations.³²⁷

Judah Champion (*aet.* 47), preaching at Hartford May 9, 1776, took an equally strong line:

“The American colonies in general, and Connecticut in special, have enjoyed most distinguishing privileges. If a perfect civil constitution cannot be found existing; yet our own we esteem, by far, the most eligible; the advantages of which are illustriously demonstrated at the present day. Our legislature consists of two houses, annually elected by the freemen of the corporation, under the sacred solemnity of an oath, to give in their suffrages so as they verily believe in their consciences may be most conducive to the best good of the government. Beyond all dispute, frequent elections are a noble preservative from the execrable sin of venality in rulers. Our General Assembly, thus composed, enact our laws, appoint our judges, erect our courts, prescribe their powers

and adjust their method of procedure. Our rulers are not foreigners obtruded upon us, from whence, interference of interest and disaffection would naturally arise. While the people retain their elective power, rulers must necessarily share very largely in the choicest affections of a free people. Such hath been the public virtue of this people, that those in highest seats of honor, dignity and authority, in this colony, have been revered for their superior wisdom and integrity, virtue, magnanimity and piety.

“. . . Whoever will impartially consider the tragical scenes of the past year and the causes of them (me thinks) cannot help but see that our precious privileges have been invaded; and that heaven hath arrested the hand of violence in its ravages. At Lexington, our countrymen were attack'd, fired upon, and some of them impiously slain. From thence the inhuman murderers of their fellow-subjects, proceeded to Concord; upon which an action ensued 'inglorious to the British arms'. The horrors of a civil war then commenced. . . .

“We are called to LIBERTY, one of heaven's choicest blessings to mankind. Amidst the various calamities of life, LIBERTY administers consolation—redoubles the pleasures of our highest gratifications—inspires the human breast with noblest sentiments—dilates the heart—expands the soul, and is the source of almost every thing excellent and desirable on earth. This animates industry and economy—promotes commerce—procures wealth—cherishes the liberal arts and sciences, and wears a most friendly aspect upon all the most important interests of mankind, while it encourages and promotes the profession and practice of religion. . . .

“The history of all ages will evince that the public interest hath succeeded best, when the people have retained, in a good measure, the power in their own hands. . . .

“This is the only provincial, General Assembly upon this continent which hath not been harrassed and perplex'd by being adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved by its Governor, except one . . .

“For Heaven's sake and for our own, let us arouse, my countrymen, and act up to the dignity of our character as free-born Americans. Let us be steady, prudent, firm and united, trusting in the LORD. Now, by the love of GOD to perishing sinners—by all that CHRIST hath done

and suffered to purchase our privileges and eternal salvation—by the worth of your own precious and immortal souls—by all that is dear and sacred—by all your regard to the sacred Trinity, to yourselves, to posterity, and to your country, we beseech and adjure you to Stand fast in the liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free. AMEN.”²⁸

Samuel West (*aet.* 46), May 29, 1776, addressed the Council House of Representatives in Boston after the evacuation in words which read like the text of Jefferson’s paper written a few weeks later: “The only difficulty remaining is to determine when a people may claim a right of forming themselves into a body politick, and may assume the powers of legislation. In order to determine this point, we are to remember, that all men being by nature equal, all the members of a community have a natural right to assemble themselves together, and to act and vote for such regulations, as they judge are necessary for the good of the whole. But when a community is become very numerous, it is very difficult, and in many cases impossible for all to meet together to regulate the affairs of the state: Hence comes the necessity of appointing delegates to represent the people in a general assembly. And this ought to be look’d upon as a sacred and unalienable right, of which a people cannot justly divest themselves, and which no human authority can in equity ever take from them, viz. that no one be obliged to submit to any laws except such as are made either by himself, or by his representative.

“If representation and legislation are inseparably connected, it follows, that when great numbers have emigrated into a foreign land, and are so far removed from the parent state, that they neither are or can be properly represented by the government from which they have emigrated, that then nature itself points out the necessity of their assuming to themselves the powers of legislation, and they have a right to consider themselves as a separate state from the other, and as such to form themselves into a body politick.

“When a people find themselves cruelly oppressed by the parent state, they have an undoubted right to throw off the yoke, and to assert their liberty, if they find good reason to judge that they have sufficient power and strength to maintain their ground in defending their just rights against their oppressors: For in this case by the law of self preservation, which is the first law of nature, they have not only an undoubted right, but it is their indispensable duty, if they cannot be redressed any other

way, to renounce all submission to the government that has oppressed them, and set up an independent state of their own; even tho' they may be vastly inferior in number to the state that has oppress'd them. When either of the afore-said cases takes place, and more especially when both concur, no rational man (I imagine,) can have any doubt in his own mind, whether such a people have a right to form themselves into a body politick, and assume to themselves all the powers of a free state."²⁹

Emphasis can be made of the series of remarkable verbal parallelisms which mark the sermon of West and the Declaration of Independence, by arranging the similar phrases in columns.

<i>Declaration</i>	<i>West</i>
Assume among the powers	Forming themselves into a body politick
Separate and equal station	To consider themselves a separate state
Laws of Nature	Law of Nature
All men are created equal	All men being by nature equal
Unalienable rights	Unalienable right
Institute new Government	Assuming to themselves the powers of legislation
It is their right	An undoubted right
It is their duty	Indispensible duty
Throw off such a government	Throw off the yoke

The Declaration of Independence reflects a very broad range of colonial clerical preaching more than that of single sermons. It should be acknowledged that the clergy were sounding-boards for the writings of political pamphleteers, as they were often the companions of many of the leaders. They were contributors to the thought of the men who went into the legislatures, and journeyed to the Continental Congress. John Adams in his diary recalls even phrases which were favorites with a preacher he had heard.³⁰ He and others cherished the momentous expressions on matters of deep public concern. This solid fabric of integrated thought, based on the Bible, makes up a large part of the contribution to the philosophy of freedom, which began to win a world-wide empire in the minds of men through the conflict which arose in the British Colonies.

CHAPTER 2

"Facts Submitted"

The Declaration of Independence, like Gaul, may be divided into three parts: the constitutional argument; the bill of grievances against George III in Parliament, advised by the Ministry; and the enacting clauses.

The second section, or grievances, had a total of eighteen specifications, one of them, the thirteenth, being detailed under nine particular heads. There is a certain amount of overlapping in this schedule of allegations. They center around the punitive measures of Parliament in 1774 and run backward in time.⁸¹

The spring-board of the whole controversy, after the Repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, was the Declaratory Act, especially that line where Parliament claimed the right to make laws for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever". These four words may be said to have lost to Great Britain her American colonies, from Maine to Georgia. John Witherspoon, soon to go to Philadelphia as a delegate from New Jersey, in a sermon at Princeton on May 17, 1776, used these words: "I call this claim unjust, of making laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever, because they are separated from us, independent of us, and have an interest in opposing us. Would any man who could prevent it, give up his estate, person and family to chuse the wisest and best master? Surely not. This is the true and proper hinge on the controversy between Great-Britain and America. It is however to be added, that such is their distance from us, that a wise and prudent administration of our affairs is as impossible as the claim of authority is unjust. Such is and must be the ignorances of the state of things here, so much time must elapse before an error can be seen and remedied, and so much injustice and partiality must be expected from the arts and misrepresentations of interested persons, that for these colonies to depend wholly upon the legislature of Great Britain, would be like other oppressive connexions, injury to the master, and ruin to the slave."⁸²

We find the words "in all cases whatsoever" constantly repeated through the decade after 1766, until they appear in the Declaration of Independence itself. The Repeal of the Stamp Act and passage of the

Declaratory Act which were essentially one Parliamentary action took place on March 18, 1766. The news reached Boston on Friday, May 16th, at 11 o'clock with the arrival of the bark *Harrison* owned by John Hancock, Capt. Shubael Coffin, Master.⁸³

A week before, the Connecticut Legislature had opened at Hartford with the customary Sermon, that year by Jonathan Lee (*aet.* 48) of Salisbury. The Stamp Act was still presumably law of the land. Lee said: "When our expectations were raised to the highest pitch; the British and American glory at the summit: What is become of the advantages, so lately in the nation's hands? Ah, where is our peace and tranquility? a sinking medium was never more loudly complained of, than its scarcity is now. And to add to our distress, trade, the only resource in such case, incumbered, and in great measure ruined. And unpayable duties enacted: and liberty, darling liberty, and inestimable privileges, which these self-settled colonies, (it is said) reserved, as a condition of submitting to the British crown, and hold as sacred, and for which our pious ancestors left their native soil, and to transmit which to posterity, suffered hardship, poverty and death; liberty, for which we have warred, and suffered the loss of blood and treasure. Hope in these days, appeared on the wing, ready to bid adieu, and leave us in thralldom, poverty and bondage. Hitherto in six troubles and seven, we have been delivered; but now, good God! whither shall we turn? to whom shall we look? Can we stand as disinterested spectators, and see the ruin of our country? without a tear, without a dying struggle: If I am unable to govern the tender passion, let the nature of the case apologize." In a foot-note to this sermon we find this: "As we have had general intelligence, by private letters from merchants in London, of a new turn of affairs in parliament, in favor to the colonies, through the influence of merchants; and especially the unanswerable and cogent reasonings of Mr. Pitt, of immortal memory in America."⁸⁴

The sermons preached at civil functions partook of the nature of judicial opinions. The audience was accustomed to receive the words of the preacher from the "desk" in much the same attitude which marked the reception of a judicial decision from the "bench". The preacher took pains, before his words were sent to the public in printed form, to justify by foot-notes, such references as had a special bearing on the events of the day. One feature of many election sermons was a succession of

particular applications to the various groups assembled; the governor and his councillors, the reverend clergy, and the people. To each was measured the meat of the discourse as it applied to the vocation of special classes of auditors.

The grievances which ultimately found a place in the Declaration of Independence, were subjects for pulpit analysis as each became a matter of public concern. Samuel Langdon (*aet.* 52), President of Harvard, addressing the Congress of the Colony of Massachusetts on May 31, 1775, said this: "Shall we rejoice, my Fathers and Brethren, or shall we weep together, on the return of this Anniversary, which from the first settlement of this Country has been sacred to Liberty, to perpetuate that invaluable blessing of chusing, from among ourselves, wise men, fearing God, and hating covetousness, to be honorable Counsellors, to constitute one essential branch of that happy government which was established on the faith of the royal charters? On this day, the people have from year to year assembled, from all our towns, in a vast congregation, with gladness and festivity, with every ensign of joy displayed in our Metropolis, which now, alas, is made a garrison of mercenary troops, the strong hold of despotism. But how shall I now address you from this Desk, remote from the Capital, and remind you of the important business which distinguished this day in our Kalendar, without spreading a gloom over this assembly, by exhibiting the melancholy change made in the face of our public affairs?"⁸⁵ The point of this lies in the fact that the assemblage was meeting in Watertown rather than in Boston. This was what was in the mind of Jefferson when he wrote: "He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures,—"

Back in 1772 Isaac Skillman (*aet.* 32) alluded to the dissolution of public bodies which Jefferson stated thus: "He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people,—" Skillman declaimed the matter in a more fervid manner: "What is rebellion, my Lord? If I understand it right, Rebels are persons rising up, with an assumed authority and power to act, dictate, and rule, in direct violation of the laws of the land. I believe, my Lord, I am right, for this reason, because your G(---) F(---) g, and your G(---) T(---) n, when in North Carolina, thought so, and

like cruel, bloodthirsty savages murdered mankind for uniting to oppose that bloody power who attempted to destroy their lives and liberties.”³⁶

William Gordon (*aet.* 47), an indefatigable reporter and later author of a history of the American Revolution, whose pen was very active and whose popular credit was high, took a more sober line as he commented on the problem in December 1774: “The clause in the regulating act respecting town meetings, leaves it in the power of the Governor, to prevent them all at pleasure, those only excepted for the choice of town officers in March, and for the choice of Representatives. Neither the most trifling nor the most important business can be legally transacted, so as to be binding upon the inhabitants, even in the most distant towns of the government, without leave first had and obtained of the Governor in writing, expressing such special business, though it should happen that if not done, within less time than necessary for the obtaining of the leave, it cannot be done at all. The town’s-men can neither lay out a new road, nor raise monies for mending an old one: or can they settle a minister, without obtaining the express written leave of the Governor. Yea, they are forbid so much as to talk, for they are not to treat, of any other matter at their March meeting, except the election of their officers, nor at any other meeting, except the business expressed in the leave given by the Governor, or in his absence the Lieutenant Governor. If this is not to establish slavery by legislative authority, I beg to know what is? . . . Should a favorite of the Governor have embezzled the towns-money, how shall a meeting be obtained to vote and order a prosecution against him? Should a candidate (for pastor of the church) be reported as a warm friend to the liberties of the people, how shall leave be had for his being settled, though unanimously approved of, and admired? Should an oppressed town be desirous of stating its grievances, and praying a redress, how shall the inhabitants do it in a corporate capacity, should the Commander-in-Chief be prejudiced against them? Should the electors be inclined to instruct their representatives upon matters of the highest concern to them, how shall they do it without violating the law, when the ruler’s interest prevents his giving them leave?”³⁷

The tenor of public sentiment and its echo in the Declaration of Independence is again illustrated by the complaint which Jefferson made to run thus: “He has endeavoured to prevent the populations of these States for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization for

Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands,—” In December 1774 and in March 1775 two New England divines were dealing with the matter. John Lathrop (*act.* 35), said: “If Great Britain is jealous of the increasing interest of the colonies, no doubt she will exert her power to check their growth, or her policy to draw off their riches as fast as they acquire them. And from the measures which have been pursued, with unremitting zeal for several years past, the Americans are made to believe, that Great-Britain does not wish the Colonies to make further advances toward ‘powerful States’. The business then is to embarrass new settlements, to lay such burdens on the colonies now planted as to prevent emigrations to them from the crowded parts of Europe, and establish such laws as shall render, not only the money, but the persons of Americans, the property of the British Parliament, or of the crown.”³⁸ Oliver Noble (*act.* 41), said, on March 8, 1775: “Well did the despots at home know, that if Charming Freedom spread her olive branches in America, emigrations from them to us, would soon go near to depopulate their own country; weakening them and strengthening us, until America became invincible; and therefore open strides of arbitrary power, were first to appear in the Colonies, while the mines were laying at home; that when we were subdued they might open their batteries with safety against English Liberty; and Britons be made to feel the same oppressive hand of despotic power.”³⁹

One of the most provocative steps taken by the home government was the change in the judiciary which made colonial judges dependent on the government for their appointment, tenure of office and the payment of their salaries. Skillman in 1772 saw the danger. He said: “But if the Judge ask for a reward from the Crown of Britain, let them not have it by any means: For if once the Judges of the courts of Judicature of this province become dependent on the favour of the Crown or Ministry at Home for their support or salaries, you will become a nation of slaves to ministerial power. For thereby you submit the key of all your essential Rights as Americans to be in the hands of your enemies. If you suffer the Judges to become dependent for their pay upon the Ministry of England, what are they then but the Ministry’s servants?”⁴⁰ Jefferson expressed the dangerous principle by declaring that the King “has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries,—”

Much public opprobrium attached to the flood of royal job-holders which began to accumulate in the Colonies under the program of an intensified official administration. Jefferson framed the thing with classic simplicity: "He has erected a multitude of New offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance,—" For six years, however, the pulpit had spoken against the policy. Stephen Johnson (*aet.* 46), in 1770, said: "The treasures of the people will not be lavished to support idle drones, favorites and minions of power; who add not strength or glory to the state, but are a scandal to government, debilitate and degrade the dignity of it . . ."⁴¹

Those attending the Annual Freemen's meeting in New-Haven in 1773 heard Benjamin Trumbull (*aet.* 38), say: "... as the government of a people, by their free-born sons, hath the happiest tendency to maintain and perpetuate their valuable rights and privileges; so the introduction of foreigners, to civil rule, hath the most efficacious tendency to subvert their constitution, and to reduce them to a state of slavery and wretchedness."⁴² Samuel Webster (*aet.* 31), preaching in 1774, spoke these words: "... because they have squandered away the nation's money in the most shameful manner, . . . they threaten to take away all our liberty and property . . . the money extorted . . . is given to placemen and pensioners here, who are to be our task-masters, to afflict us, and riot on our spoils."⁴³

A joint statement by Francis Alison (*aet.* 70), James Sproat (*aet.* 53), George Duffield (*aet.* 43), and Robert Davidson (*aet.* 25), in a printed letter from the Presbyterian Ministers of Philadelphia to their brethren in North Carolina, July 10, 1775, put it this way: "... while we are worth a groat, a rapacious minister with a band of needy dependents and pensioners, will find reasons and pretenses to strip us of every thing . . ."⁴⁴

In Shippensburgh, Pennsylvania, on August 31, 1775, Robert Cooper (*aet.* 43), was telling his listeners: "Since the time may come when the whole of Great Britain, may bear no greater proportion to the British Colonies, either with regard to circuit or number of inhabitants, than one of our counties now do to a province; and yet this vast extent of country shall have no other security against tyranny and oppression, but the complexion of the British Parliament, the evils incident to which

we can neither prevent nor remedy. As we have no hand in chusing any of the Members of Parliament, so we must according to statute, be, not merely the subjects of the Imperial Crown of Great-Britain, but the slaves of the Parliament of Great-Britain. As they may drain away our property by heavy taxes, to be absorbed in discharging the almost immense national debt, or consumed in court luxury; so they may send pensioners and placemen to devour the fruits of our industry among ourselves.”⁴⁵

Armed forces were then added to civil servants. Jefferson wrote in 1776: “He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures,—” Nathaniel Appleton (*aet.* 82) prayed in 1770: “Oh! then how should we hope and plead with God in holy faith and confidence, that there may be no impositions upon us but what are constitutional. And that for the time to come, there may be no occasion for military troops among us, to inforce any laws upon us; which have been the unhappy occasion of many affrays and disturbances among us, till of late it came even to the shedding of blood; which blood lately ran down the streets of our capital and which is now crying to God from the ground, and waiting for a strait and impartial inquisition.”⁴⁶

John Lathrop (*aet.* 32), was quoted, in 1771, in a preface to a sermon preached March 5, 1770, the Sunday after the killing of men on the street in the Boston Massacre, as follows: “Mr. Lathrop says, that this sermon while innocent blood was fresh in view, was not designed for publication; and is now only yielded to, on earnest solicitation . . . sentiments which he is well assured are peculiarly grateful to the people with whom the kind providence of God has placed him: . . . sentiments which . . . were urged and defended with boldness and fervor by his predecessors, particularly the worthy and venerable Doctors Increase and Cotton Mather, and which he doubts not his brethren of the clergy will be ready on all proper occasions to assert . . .”⁴⁷ Jefferson stated it in 1776: “He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power,—”

“Cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world”, the words of the Declaration of Independence, was described in 1774 by Charles Chauncy (*aet.* 69), in a published “Letter to a Friend”: “. . . the support of this town (Boston) is almost wholly dependent upon trade, the

carrying on of which make way for imployment, and employment procures daily bread for at least eight tenths of its inhabitants.

"... Our vessels with wood, which by the Boston port-bill, are obliged to put in at Marblehead, to be enabled by the custom-house at Salem to proceed to Boston harbor, are denied this privilege, till the wood that is in them has been taken out, and then put in again, which occasions not only expensive labour, but tedious delay . . . these same vessels when they are come to Boston, are not suffered to depart . . . till the owners . . . have travelled to Plymouth . . . and have visited the Boston custom-house, which is now removed there." In the same letter Chauncy continued: "The Ministry well know, that not Boston or the Massachusetts-province only, but all the American colonies were united as one in thinking it unconstitutional to be taxed by the parliament, as they are not represented there . . .

"... all ranks, orders and conditions of men from one end of the continent to the other. Even friends of government, are now fully satisfied that the plan . . . is intire obedience to the demands of despotism, instead of those constitutional laws we are perfectly willing to be governed by.

"This act . . . is an alarm to all the North American colonies . . ."⁴⁸

In May 1776, Judah Champion (*aet.* 47), too, spoke of this grievance which Jefferson inserted in the Declaration in June: "imposing Taxes on us without our consent". Champion's words were: "Not long since, the British parliament made solemn declaration, '*That it has a right to make laws binding upon the colonies, in all cases whatsoever.*' In consequence of which, taxes have been imposed upon us without our consent—chartered privileges vacated—various cruel edicts passed. The time would fail us to enumerate and particularly consider those which violate our essential rights. To enforce [sic] which edicts, fleets and armies have been sent over, compelling us either to disobey the divine precept in our text, or engage in a civil war. These colonies have nobly chosen the latter."⁴⁹

The iniquitous tampering with trial by jury, especially the outrageous attempt to take cases to England for trial had been the subject of Benjamin Trumbull's (*aet.* 38), solemn words in 1773: "... the provision long since made in our nation, that every man should be judged by twelve jurors of the neighbourhood, in all cases of property, as well

as of Life and Death, and that every man should be judged by his peers, may serve further to illustrate the point in hand. . . . The right of trials by juries hath been esteemed as a privilege of inestimable worth, and as the bulwark of British Liberty, for many hundred years.”⁵⁰ Samuel Webster (*aet.* 31), in 1774, declared: “We are condemned untried, unheard, contrary to the first principles of justice in all nations.”⁵¹

Two years later Jefferson included these complaints in the Declaration, writing: “For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury:—For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses,—” Jefferson went on to the next point: “For Abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies,—”

In a Thanksgiving Sermon in Connecticut in 1774, Joseph Lyman (*aet.* 25), was preaching: “. . . The Quebec Bill was made, as it was said in Parliament, and has been repeatedly avowed since, in order to be a curb upon the licentiousness of the other colonies. By which we are to understand, that the bill was framed for a restraint upon the freedoms and liberties of the ancient English colonies . . . We may be threatened with confiscation of estates, with halters and military execution . . . They will strenuously endeavor to break the happy union of the Colonies, and prevent the full operation of the association entered into, by the general Congress.”⁵²

Jefferson charged Britain with the expulsion of the Colonies from the natural benefits of government in these words:— “He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us,—”

Two months before the Lee Resolutions were presented to the Congress, Enoch Huntington (*aet.* 35), speaking to the Freemen of Middletown, Connecticut, spelled out the Royal defection in these words: “The resistance made to their despotic designs and power, hath exasperated them to the most cruel pitch, and what we have to expect from them, if left to their mercy, may be conjectured, from what hath already been felt, where their vengeance hath been permitted to extend to execution. Falmouth, Charlestown, Boston, and Norfolk, all our maritime places

accessible to them; their spreading fire and sword, and desolation, wherever they could, give us the most signal and convincing evidence that their 'tender mercies are cruelty'."⁵³

From Massachusetts to Georgia in 1775, the clergy were giving credence to Jefferson's statement: "He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our People,—" In a "Sermon on the Occasion of the burning of Falmouth", preached in October, 1775, David McClure (*aet.* 27), asked: "Why does the powerful nation of Britain set themselves against us and against the Lord? Have they asked counsel of Jehovah, and has He given them commission to destroy us? Has He said to them: go up and my presence shall go with you to root out and to destroy?"⁵⁴

Georgia had not been represented in the First Continental Congress, the only absentee. But John Joachim Zubly (*aet.* 51), was down there rousing the people. A Swiss, attached to several religious groups from time to time, and a politician, Zubly had "parts". On the 4th of July 1775 he made an oration before the Georgia Provincial Congress and ere long delegates, including Zubly and another ordained clergyman, Lyman Hall, were on the way to Philadelphia. Alas for the date and the man. He balked at Independence, and retired to disgrace among his own people. In 1775, however, he had this to say: "Sand and blood will make a firm cementation, and enough American blood has already been shed to cement together a thirteen-fold cord, not easily to be broken."⁵⁵ Zubly did not stay to sign Jefferson's statement: "He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the work of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.—".

A year before, in 1775, Joseph Perry (*aet.* 44), had summed it up in this manner: "In general the ground of our complaints, is such things as these. A determined plan already pushed on, to the astonishment of all true Englishmen, calculated in its natural tendency to subvert the British constitution, which for ages has stood the guardian of the means of her subjects' happiness, the envy of foreign nations, and the admiration of the whole world, and to substitute in the room thereof, absolute despotism, and as the certain consequence, cruel tyranny, and the total slavery of all America."⁵⁶

CHAPTER 3

The Exscinded Paragraph

The draft of the Declaration of Independence which Thomas Jefferson showed to the four other members of the committee and which went to the floor of the Congress with their approval, contained an anti-slavery plank which ran as follows: "He has waged a cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither, this piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no facet of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another."⁵⁷

Composed by Jefferson, a slave-owner, it also represented the views of many of the clergy. The slavery paragraph really gave the final drive to the Declaration as a whole. It would have been a perfect climax had it been retained and might have obviated the war of 1861-65, which made Lincoln's re-statement of it a belated recognition of the seriousness of the omission in 1776. Is there not a fore-gleam of Lincoln in this word of Nathaniel Niles (*aet.* 33), in a sermon on Liberty, given at Newburyport, June 5, 1774? "God gave us liberty, and we have enslaved our fellow-men. May we not fear that the law of retaliation is about to be executed on us? What can we object against it? What excuse can we urge why our oppression shall not be repaid in kind? Should the Africans see God Almighty subjecting us to all the evils we have brought on them, and should they cry to us, O daughter of America, who are to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou has served us. . . ."⁵⁸

Lincoln probably never read Niles' sermon, but hear the harmony: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."⁵⁹

The June 1776 issue of "The Pennsylvania Magazine", printed in Philadelphia, issued customarily on first Wednesdays, may have been among the accumulated papers on the desk at which Jefferson worked. In it was one of John Witherspoon's (*aet.* 48) "Druid" Papers in which Jefferson doubtless had read these words: "The same thing I say of proclaiming liberty to slaves, and stirring them up to rebel against their masters . . . there are some things so base and treacherous in their nature, and so pernicious in the example to human society in general, that whatever effect they might be supposed to have in a particular case, all men of liberal minds have concurred in rejecting them."⁶⁰

Witherspoon only echoed the words spoken in Connecticut by another clergyman, Levi Hart (*aet.* 38): "Could it be thought then that such a palpable violation of the law of nature, and of the fundamental principles of society, would be practiced by individuals & connived at, & tolerated by the public in British America, this land of liberty, where the spirit of freedom glows with such ardour. Did not obstinate incontestable facts compel me, I could never believe that British Americans would be guilty of such a crime, I mean that of the horrible slave-trade, carried on by numbers and tolerated by authority in this country."⁶¹

On August 4th, 1775, a broadside was issued by Daniel Byrnes, dated Wilmington, June 20th and intended for public reading before the Continental Fast set by Congress for July 20th. Even though printed after the fast, the writer deemed it worthy of consideration. It was an appeal for freeing slaves. Its Scripture was from Isaiah, the 58th chapter, where the Lord declares: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"Beloved people let us not deceive ourselves; a fast for a day will not do the work for us," the appeal declared, "justice and humility of heart

is wanting—pride and arrogance abound—If those of the several denominations (who may think it their duty) should on the day proposed, attend their several places of worship, in all the gaudiness of dress and modish vanities of the times, how think ye, will it appear to him who passed among men in a seamless garment . . .

“Are not many keeping the Africans and their descendants in abject slavery, who as a nation, never have offered us the least injury? How can any have the confidence to put up their addresses to a God of impartial justice, and ask of him success in a struggle for freedom, who at the same time are keeping others in a state of abject slavery?”⁶²

This appeal from Friends, who were notoriously anti-slavery people might not have influenced Jefferson to insert a passage in a paper intended to show a broad common concern. A sermon, however, by James Horrocks (*aet.* 29), Rector of the Bruton Parish Church and Master of the Grammar School in William and Mary College at Williamsburg, Virginia, brings us much closer to the milieu of Jefferson and gives evidence from a source in the Colony of Virginia and from among members of the Church of England. The sermon states: “. . . the feeling Heart will naturally reflect on and lament the Fate of those who are doom’d to Slavery, eternal Slavery. Unhappy Creatures destin’d to submit to it, and perhaps no less so are those Countries which are oblig’d to practise it!

“Respecting this particular, and the manner in which it is here conducted, it may be said it loses much of its Horror, when compar’d with that of other Places. This perhaps is true, and I am likewise fully persuaded, that in some of those Families which properly respect Humanity, the State of Servitude approaches to the Condition of an easy Dependance, and thro’ the consideration and mildness of the Master the very Name of Slave is oft forgotten. But of these how few! Whilst the grasping Avarice of some, the unfeeling hard-heartedness, the very monstrous Disposition of others, which seems to delight in acts of Cruelty, are known to be exercised daily in producing such Scenes of Misery and Wretchedness, as cannot but be in the highest Degree shocking to those, who know how to think properly of the Condition of Human Nature.”⁶³

Some interesting appendices are to be found in the Oration “The Beauties of Liberty,” attributed to Isaac Skillman (*aet.* 32) and delivered

in Boston December 3, 1772. One is "Remarks on the Rights and Liberties of the African." "Here let me claim your attention. Every tie of nature, every sensation of humanity, every bowels of pity, every compassion as a Christian, engages me to speak for the Personal Liberty and Freedom of those, who are the most distressed of all human beings, the natives of Africa. Were they thus distressed by Indians, Mahometans, or Turks with respect to their Liberty, they would have a right to be redressed and set free; but for mankind to be distressed and kept in Slavery by Christians, by those who love the Gospel of Christ; for such to buy their Brethren (for of one blood he has made all nations) and bind them to be Slaves to them and their heirs for life. Be astonished, ye Christians, at this! And what is more shocking even to the tenderness of nature, is to export them, for filthy lucre into the hands of Men-tyrants. But what is more alarming yet, and exceeds all bounds, is, for one Christian, and Member of a Church, to EXPORT another, and banish her to be a Slave, when in full communion in the Church." (A footnote here says 'Phillis, an African Christian, who was a member of Dr. Cooper's Church.') "Was ever such a thing heard of in the house of GOD before! Tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Boston! Shall no plea be heard? Shall no argument prevail to let these oppressed ones GO FREE. Have Christians lost all the tenderness of nature, the feelings of humanity, or the more refined sensations of Christianity? Or have the Ministers in silence forgot to shew their people this iniquity? O could they bear to see—to see did I say? nay to feel their children rent from their arms, and see them bound in irons and banished to be Slaves! O killing thought! But for Christians to encourage this bloody and inhuman Trade of Man-stealing, or Slave-making, O how shocking it is! while it may be, their nearer kindred want employment, if not bread to eat. This unlawful, inhuman practice is a sure way for mankind to ruin America, and for Christians to bring their children, and their children's children to a morsel of bread. Much has been wrote, and well wrote to dissuade the Americans from the practice of so great an EVIL; many begin to listen to the laws of humanity and force of the argument: But surely what the Prophet Isaiah says will be sufficient with every true Minister of the Gospel, and with every Christian and Son of Liberty in America; Isa. 1viii. 6. 'Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, that ye break every yoke.'

“What follows is desired to be published with the Oration, having been offered to one of the Publishers of a News-Paper, but was refused a place; but as the Printer is determined, even at the hazard of his life, to maintain inviolable, that inestimable Privilege of mankind, LIBERTY OF THE PRESS, which can never be wanted more than at this time, when near one sixth part of the inhabitants of America are held in REAL Slavery, under the different pretences of interest and religion, however well grounded the former may be, sure I am the latter must be very vague, as the conduct of the Buyers of these People serve daily to confirm every thinking person in this opinion: For reasons above, shall comply with the request of an Advocate for a multitude of these distressed People, who are unjustly held in Bondage by those who profess to act on principles of Liberty and Religion, by inserting the following Piece, with the Circular Letter which was sent with the same.

‘Christian Brethren: Should I attempt to delineate the dire effects which the iniquitous and cruel Trade of Slave-making has occasioned, both in Africa and America, I should paint out such scenes of distress, havock, and detestation, as must not only serve to shock human nature, but would swell my piece to a volume much larger than ever was published in the universe. Let it suffice, kind Reader, (and may I be permitted to address myself in particular to you, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, who are employed in preaching the glorious Gospel of Liberty, and who must shortly give an account of your Stewardship) to lead you to the distant clime of Africa. Look ye into the native country of the distressed Africans! Who would not shudder at viewing the tender parent weeping for the loss of a favorite son! A daughter whose plighted vows, perhaps, have been given in the conubial state! Dutiful children, with a filial piety bewailing their irretrievable misfortune by losing an affectionate, tender, and loving father, brother, sister, neighbour, or companion! These being torn from the bosoms of each other must certainly break the strongest bonds of nature and friendship. Think! O think of this! if not totally lost to all sense of feeling, you whose hearts are adamant! I mean the Buyers and Sellers of Africans, however you may gloss your practice with the pretence of christianizing these People. I need not mention the recent proofs we have of the ill consequences arising by peopling our Islands with these Africans, as their frequent revolts so often occasion streams of blood to be shed, as well on the side of the Whites as Blacks. But may it not with truth be said these revolutions are occasioned by the cruel

treatment they meet with from their Masters? But allowing they were used in the kindest manner, is it reasonable to think they can be satisfied with their condition, as their minds must ever be imbittered with the melancholly reflection, that let their behaviour be what it may, they and their children are to be held in Bondage so long as they live! Nature trembles at such a thought, much more to experience it! What Christian, in this practice, who would not shudder at viewing our Saviour's eternal rule of righteousness!

CONSCIENCE'

"The following Circular Letter, accompanied with Mr. Swan's Piece, entitled a Dissuasive to Great-Britain and her Colonies from the Slave-Trade, were lately presented to the Gentlemen who are chosen Representatives for this Province.

BOSTON, April 20, 1773

'Sir: The efforts made by the Legislative of this province in their last sessions to free themselves from Slavery, gave us, who are in that deplorable state, a high degree of satisfaction. We expect great things from men who have made such a noble stand against the designs of their fellow-men to enslave them. We cannot but wish and hope, Sir, that you will have the same grand object, we mean civil and religious Liberty, in view in your next session. The divine spirit of Freedom seems to fire every humane breast on this Continent, except such as are bribed to assist in executing the execrable plan.

'We are very sensible that it would be highly detrimental to our present Masters, if we were allowed to demand all that of right belongs to us for past services; this we disclaim. Even the Spaniards, who have not those sublime ideas of Freedom that English men have, are conscious that they have no right to all the services of their fellow-men, we mean the Africans, whom they have purchased with their money; therefore they allow them one day in a week to work for themselves, to enable them to earn money to purchase the residue of their time, which they have a right to demand in such portions as they are able to pay for, (a due appraizment of their services being first made, which always stand at the purchase money.) We do not pretend to dictate to you, Sir, or to the honorable Assembly, of which you are a member; we acknowledge our obligations to you for what you have already done, but

as the people of this province seem to be actuated by the principles of equity and justice, we cannot but expect your House will again take our deplorable case into serious consideration, and give us that ample relief which, as men, we have a natural right to.

'But since the wise and righteous Governor of the universe has permitted our fellow men to make us slaves, we bow in submission to him, and determine to behave in such a manner, as that we may have reason to expect the divine approbation of, and assistance in, our peaceable and lawful attempts to gain our freedom.

'We are willing to submit to such regulations and laws, as may be made relative to us, until we leave the province, which we determine to do as soon as we can from our joynt labours procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the coast of Africa, where we propose a settlement. We are very desirous that you should have instructions relative to us, from your town, therefore we pray you to communicate this letter to them, and ask this favor for us.

'In behalf of our fellow Slaves in this Province, and by order of their Committee,

PETER BESTES, SAMBO FREEMAN, FELIX HOLBROOK, CHESTER JOIE.'⁶⁴

In the period 1770-1775, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others were filling up the valleys of Virginia lying towards the west, not far from Monticello. The anti-slavery sentiment was strong among them. They were not slaveholders as a rule but small farmers handling crops other than tobacco. They were poor folk and themselves settlers, many for conscience sake, who had drifted away from the seaboard after coming across the Atlantic.

The trend of church planting in Virginia in the three-quarters of the century before the outbreak of the Revolution is remarkable in the fact that the period began with an almost exclusive preponderance of Anglican churches, 'by law established', and ended with a rush of non-conformist congregations which could not fail to have a profound effect upon the contemporary political opinion. 1700 found Virginia with sixty-two Anglican churches and two Presbyterian and that was all. The period 1770-1775 saw more than thirty Presbyterian congregations started, and more than sixty Baptist groups formed.⁶⁵

Political leadership, foreseeing the need for armed defense of the principles which an increasing number of colonists were daily espousing, was alert to this influence of the small-farmer population rapidly filling up the Old Dominion. Collating the militia rolls with the church distribution by counties, one can see that the officers and men of the army of Virginia would be heavily weighted with people who had been taught from childhood to fear the Royal Prerogative. And it has been noted that the Anglican element in Virginia was far more sympathetic to anti-parliamentary sentiments than the same communion in more northern climes.⁶⁶

The Presbyterian Synod of New York and Philadelphia met in May 1774. On the docket there came a memorial from two highly influential Congregationalists of New England, Dr. Ezra Stiles (*aet.* 47), and the Rev. Samuel Hopkins (*aet.* 53), both of Newport.⁶⁷ Hopkins "soon after his installation at Newport, in 1770, . . . formed a plan for sending the gospel to Africa".⁶⁸ Dr. Stiles, in his Diary for April 8, 1773, tells of a conversation the two had on the subject of African Missions. Two negro youths in Hopkins' congregation had shown great promise and a plan was matured to further their education and send them to Princeton, where they were to be under the care of Dr. Witherspoon.⁶⁹ On August 31, 1773 Stiles and Hopkins jointly signed a memorial for distribution among the ministers of Massachusetts and Connecticut. It is as follows: "To all who are desirous to promote the kingdom of Christ on earth, in the salvation of sinners, the following narrative and proposal are offered, to excite and solicit their charity and prayers.

"There are two colored men, members of the First Congregational Church in Newport, on Rhode Island, named Bristol Yamma, and John Quamine, who were hopefully converted some years ago, and have from that time sustained a good character as Christians, and have made good proficiency in Christian knowledge. The latter is son of a rich man at Annamaboe, and was sent by his father to this place for an education among the English, and then to return home. All this the person to whom he was committed engaged to perform, for a good reward. But, instead of being faithful to his trust, he sold him a slave for life. But God, in his providence, has put it in the power of both of them to obtain their freedom. The former is, however, fifty dollars in debt, as he could not pur-

chase his freedom under two hundred dollars; which he must procure by his labor, unless relieved by the charity of others.

"These persons, thus acquainted with Christianity, and apparently devoted to the service of Christ, are about thirty years old; have good natural abilities; are apt, steady, and judicious, and speak their native language,—the language of a numerous, potent nation in Guinea, to which they both belong. They are not only willing, but very desirous to quit all worldly prospects, and risk their lives in attempting to open a door for the propagation of Christianity among their poor, ignorant, perishing heathen brethren.

"The concurrence of all these things has led to set on foot a proposal to send them to Africa, to preach the gospel there, if, upon trial, they shall appear in any good measure qualified for this business. In order to this, they must be put to school, and taught to read and write better than they now can, and be instructed more fully in divinity, &c. And if, upon trial, they appear to make good proficiency, and shall be thought by competent judges to be fit for such a mission, it is not doubted that money may be procured sufficient to carry the design into execution.

"What is now wanted and asked is money to pay the debt mentioned, and to support them at school, to make the trial whether they may be fitted for the proposed mission. Whatever shall be given to this end, and put into the hands of the subscribers, they engage faithfully to improve to this purpose only, and to promote the proposed mission according to their best discretion; and to be at all times ready to give an account to those who desire it, of all they shall receive, and the manner in which it has been expended.

"As God has, in his providence, so far opened the way to this, by raising up these persons, and ordering the remarkable concurring circumstances and events which have been mentioned, and there is, most probably, no other instance in America, where so many things conspire to point out the way for a mission of this kind, with such encouragement to pursue it, may it not be hoped it will have the patronage and assistance of all the pious and benevolent?

"And it is humbly proposed to those who are convinced of the iniquity of the slave trade, and are sensible of the great inhumanity and cruelty of enslaving so many thousands of our fellow-men every year,

with all the dreadful and horrid attendants, and are ready to bear testimony against it in all proper ways, and do their utmost to put a stop to it, whether they have not a good opportunity of doing this, by cheerfully contributing according to their ability to promote the mission proposed; and whether this is not the best compensation we are able to make the poor Africans, for the injuries they are constantly receiving by this unrighteous practice and all its attendants.

"But, aside from this consideration, may it not be hoped that all who are heartily praying, 'Thy kingdom come', will liberally contribute to forward this attempt to send the glorious gospel of the blessed God to the nations who now worship false gods, and dwell in the habitations of cruelty, and the land of the shadow of death; especially, since the King of Zion has promised that whosoever parts with any thing in this world, for the kingdom of God's sake, shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."⁷⁰

This is the paper, we believe, which was presented to the Synod in May 1774. The Minutes of that body trace its course: From the morning session of May 21, 1774 this item appears: "A representation from the Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles and the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, respecting the sending two natives of Africa on a mission to propagate Christianity in their native country, and a request that the Synod would countenance this undertaking by their approbation of it, was brought in and read. The consideration of the above deferred."

Monday afternoon, May 23rd: "The representation and request relative to sending negro missionaries to Africa, was taken into consideration, in consequence of which the subject of negro slavery came to be considered, and after much reasoning on the matter, Dr. (John) Rodgers, Messrs. John Miller, (James) Caldwell, and (Joseph) Montgomery, were appointed a committee to bring in an overture on this subject on Wednesday morning."

Wednesday, the 25th, was fully occupied by matters presented by the "Commissioners from Wilmington," so it was on Thursday the 26th, that the overture was presented. The record runs thus: "The committee appointed to prepare an overture on the representation from Dr. Stiles and the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, and also on the subject of negro slavery, brought in a draught, the first part of which being read and amended, was approved and is as follows:

"The consideration of Dr. Stiles's and Mr. Hopkins's representation and request resumed. 'The Synod is very happy to have an opportunity to express their readiness to concur with and assist in a mission to the African tribes, and especially where so many circumstances concur as in the present case, to intimate that it is the will of God, and to encourage us to hope for success. We assure the gentlemen aforesaid, we are ready to do all that is proper for us in our station for their encouragement and assistance.'

"And it is ordered, that the clerk transmit a copy of this minute to Doctor Stiles. But some difficulties attending the discussion of the second part of that overture, the Synod agree to defer the affair to our next meeting."⁷¹

The last sentence is significant. The first part of the overture agreed to the mission. The second part had to do with the matter of slavery. The second part presented "some difficulties" and action was deferred. It was never taken up again. In 1780 the Synod appointed a committee to review the records and it reported "that an affair respecting the enslaving of negroes, appears to have been before the Synod, A. D. 1774, but by some means passed over by the following Synods, and not since resumed. The Synod then resumed the consideration of that affair, and after debating the same at considerable length, adjourned to nine o'clock tomorrow morning." No further reference is found.⁷²

Bristol Yamma and John Quamine, the two students, sailed from Newport for Princeton November 22, 1774 and passed under the care of Dr. Witherspoon, where they spent one winter.⁷³

The second proposal in the overture, which met difficulties on the floor of the Synod may be reconstructed from the Memorial of Stiles and Hopkins, where it says: "It is humbly proposed to those who are convinced", etc. It must have been a deliverance against slavery, and evidently the Synod was not prepared at that point to give such an undertaking. Here then is a parallel between the debates on the floor of the Synod in Philadelphia in May 1774, and that in Congress in Philadelphia in July 1776.

Ebenezer Baldwin (*aet.* 30) the brilliant young minister at Danbury, Connecticut in September 1775 gave voice to the anti-slavery sentiment

in his Appendix to Samuel Sherwood's sermon. He wrote: "The present alarming state of things therefore loudly calls upon us to examine what sins in particular have provoked heaven thus to come out in judgment against us; and perhaps there cannot be a better rule of determining than to enquire what sins these calamities are properly retributive of, and by this rule will not the enslaving of the poor Africans in the colonies stand forth in the front of the dreadful catalogue? Are not the colonies guilty of forcibly depriving them of their natural rights? Will not the arguments we use in defence of our own liberties against the claims of the British parliament, equally conclude in their favour? And is it not easy to see there is something retributive in the present judgments of heaven? We keep our fellow men in slavery—heaven is suffering others to enslave us."⁷⁴ Baldwin stood first in his class, returned as a tutor and had much to do with Yale's rehabilitation after President Clap's resignation. When 25 years old he took the church at Danbury, anticipating a life of scholarly pursuits for which he prepared by gathering in the manse a library purchased in England. Six years later, while serving as a chaplain with his parishioners in the campaign at New York, 1776, he contracted fever and lived only long enough to reach home.

The excision of Jefferson's anti-slavery passage from the Declaration of Independence is a mystery. Apparently it suffered the same fate as befell the similar proposal in the Synod of the Presbyterians in 1774. In both instances there is lack of detail as to what happened, Carl Becker in his volume on the Declaration, quotes John Adams, who called the paragraph a "vehement phillippic against negro slavery" and "thought it one of the finest parts of the Declaration", and then says "Congress omitted this passage altogether." Becker felt the passage lacked "warmth" and that Jefferson "attempted something which he was temperamentally unfitted to achieve". But Jefferson believed in freeing the slaves. If he was "striving for an effect that does not come" and reveals a "sense of labored effort",⁷⁵ we must attribute it to the fact that he felt he was bringing forth a proposition which was due for assassination by some 'person or persons unknown'.

In other words, a deliverance against slavery was due for death in the lobbies rather than on the floor. John H. Hazelton suggests this. He quotes Jefferson: "the clause too, reprobating the enslaving of the inhabitants of Africa, was struck out in complaisance [with] [to] South

Carolina & Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves. our Northern brethren also I believe felt a little tender [on that] under those censures. for tho' their people have very few slaves themselves they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others." And elsewhere, also from Jefferson: "severe strictures on the conduct of the British king in negating our repeated repeals of the law which permitted the importation of slaves, were disapproved by some Southern gentlemen, whose reflections were not yet matured to the full abhorrence of that traffic."⁷⁶

Justin Winsor notes the "omission of the reprobation of slavery, in deference to South Carolina and Georgia".⁷⁷ Lossing, however, quotes this from *The Life of Richard Henry Lee*: "It has been asserted that this paragraph was expunged because it was not palatable to those delegates who were slaveholders, and that it was striken out lest it should cause them to cast a negative vote on the question (of Independence). There is no proof that such selfish motives actuated any member of that assembly. It was a sacred regard for truth which caused it to be stricken out. No such charge as the paragraph contained could justly be made against George III., then under arraignment. The slave-trade was begun and carried on long before the reign of any of his house, and it is not known that he ever gave his assent to anything relating to slavery, except to abolish it, and to declare the trade a piracy."⁷⁸

Whatever the balance of influence for or against this most notable omission from the greatest paper against slavery in our history, the fact remains that it was omitted; to be dealt with later under less happy circumstances.

CHAPTER 4

"We Mutually Pledge"

Before the enacting paragraphs were made the conclusion of the Declaration of Independence, and the resolution brought from Virginia by Richard Henry Lee had been framed in context suitable for argument and endorsement, Jefferson recited the story of colonial patience in the face of oppression by alluding to the sundry petitions presented to the Crown, all answered by "repeated injuries". Coupled with these dutiful appeals, there had gone warnings to the "British brethren", citizens like the colonists, advising them of the peril of a course which was rapidly disintegrating the body politic. "They too have been deaf to the voice of justice & of consanguinity".

The tenor of these statements permeates the sermons of the clergy. Being men of peace, they stood more aloof from the will to war than any other group. From excerpts already quoted in other connections this tolerant attitude may be remembered. Another source, we think, may be found in the eight volumes of John Rushworth's "Historical Collections" (London, 1682-1701). A set was in the Yale College Library in 1755, as listed in the catalogue issued by Thomas Clap.⁷⁰ We know Thomas Jefferson consulted Rushworth when the Virginians were planning a public Fast Day for June 1, 1774.⁸⁰ This unique set of archives of the Great Rebellion in Great Britain, the course of the Long Parliament, the meeting of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, the trial of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and later of the King, the long exchange of papers between King and Parliament, all these seem to the editor to have afforded a notable text-book for the men who met in Philadelphia. Reading the eight volumes attentively the striking parallels of language and style between the Journals of the Continental Congress and Parliament, the mixture of insistence and respect, the slow but relentless prosecution of the cause in hand,—all these and other lighter touches, so wonderfully collected by Rushworth, who was clerk for many of the most notable events, and who managed to survive to start the volumes through the press in the last quarter of the 17th century, give a context which is highly suggestive.

It suggests the place of the clergy because in the years of the 17th century in England, Ireland, and Scotland, the clergy were at the forefront of the controversy. Some of the actors in those earlier scenes themselves came to the colonies. Some of their successors and descendants were in the pulpits of the Colonies in the 18th century. Students in the colonial colleges of the 18th century had seen Rushworth. Those who later went to sit in the Congress were conversant with procedures. Those who went to the pulpits were cognizant of the issues. It has seemed to the editor that His Excellency, General George Washington, when he wrote his letters to the Congress, very fairly imitated His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax, relative of Washington's friend and patron.

The final portion of the Declaration of Independence, namely the enacting paragraphs, is as follows: "We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions do, in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved:

"And that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."⁸¹

Just two years before on June 5, 1774, Nathaniel Niles (*aet.* 33) said in Newburyport "How strangely inconsistent are we in treating that liberty (spiritual under the Gospel), which is of infinite worth, with neglect and contempt, when it is most freely offered us, while, at the same time we are ready to sacrifice, not only our fortunes, but our very lives and friends to purchase, and defend that which at best is but imperfect, uncertain and temporal? To struggle for the latter is laudable, but to neglect the former is infinitely criminal."⁸²

On July 14, 1774 Samuel Webster (*aet.* 31) on the Provincial Fast Day in Massachusetts spoke at Salisbury: ". . . the same Lord yet reigneth, therefore, let New-England, yea, let the earth rejoice. For I firmly believe, that if we are not grossly wanting in ourselves, but commit ourselves and our cause to the God of our Fathers, in well doing, when we have suffer'd a while, he will also deliver us."⁸³

Joseph Perry (*aet.* 44), in his Election Sermon delivered in Connecticut on May 11, 1775 said: "Our very distress dictates the most undaunted resolution in all lawful measures: . . . What of this spirit has appeared, should therefore be tenderly nursed. And has there not appeared a becoming resolution? has it not spread surprisingly thro' all America? has it not in a proper manner manifested itself in the resolves of Assemblies, in the appointment and production of the Continental Congress, who have performed not only to the approbation, but to the admiration of their constituents. . . . Of the last importance is the strictest union in every town, and between the towns in every colony, and between the colonies through the whole continent . . ."⁸⁴

On June 2, 1775 Nathan Perkins (*aet.* 27) spoke these words to "Troops from West Hartford who went in Defense of their Country": ". . . we see the justice of our cause. The obstinacy and cruelty of our foes have obliged us to appeal from reason to arms. There is no choice left us but slavery or civil war. England, whose constitution hath been the glory, admiration, and envy of surrounding states, England, as famous for arts as for arms, England, which hath shed the blood of her best citizens in the glorious cause of liberty, hath now sat down herself to forge the arbitrary chains. The laws of reason and self-preservation will justify the most strenuous opposition, nay duty calls on us to buckle on the harness & march out into the field and if we must give up our liberties, give them up at the point of the sword."⁸⁵

On June 29, 1775 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia pronounced these words in "A Pastoral Letter to the Congregations under their Care": "Be careful to maintain the union which at present exists through all the colonies; nothing can be more manifest than that the success of every measure depends on its being inviolably observed, and therefore, we hope, that you will leave nothing undone which can

promote that end. In particular as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consists of Delegates chosen in the most free and unbiased manner, by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged in their difficult office . . . not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings . . . but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast Country to carry them into execution."⁸⁶

David Jones (*aet.* 39) in a Sermon preached in Chester County, Pennsylvania on the Day of the Continental Fast, July 20, 1775, said: "Remember our Congress is in eminent danger. It is composed of men of equal characters and fortunes of most, if not superior to any in North-America. These worthy gentlemen have ventured all in the cause of liberty for our sakes; if we were to forsake them, they must be abandoned to the rage of a relentless ministry. Some of them are already proscribed, and no doubt this would be the fate of the rest: How could we bear to see these worthy patriots hanged as criminals of the deepest dye? their families plundered of all that they possess, and abandoned to distress and poverty? . . . Therefore if we do not stand by them, even unto death, we should be guilty of the basest ingratitude, and entail on ourselves everlasting infamy."⁸⁷

On August 28, 1775 Robert Cooper (*aet.* 43) addressed some of Colonel Montgomery's troops at Lancaster, Pennsylvania as follows: "Declare upon the one hand, that if you may enjoy unmolested, those rights, which are derived from God alone; you are ready to lay down the arms which you have been constrained, as the last resort, to take up; on the other hand, with drawn sword, assert, that rather than surrender that sacred depositum of liberty, which we received from our ancestors, and are bound to transmit to our posterity, you will sign the remonstrance with your own blood."⁸⁸

The crescendo mounted until it sounded amid the din of arms.

POSTSCRIPT

The moral of this study is not the excellency of the clergy, though they are a respectable company; nor is it the dependence of the statesmen upon the religious leaders, though that is patent. The moral is this; the political institutions of a people must be consonant with their intellectual and spiritual elevation. Forty years and more ago the late Professor Willoughby returned from a mission to China where he helped to prepare the Constitution of 1911. Talking to his class in political science, he pointed out that while it was possible to draft for a people a constitution on the best lines of American tradition, that would prove far from enough, except the minds and hearts of the people were equal to working the machinery thus placed at their disposal. The zeal of our day for independence among many peoples of the world, is a dubious thing unless it be tempered with knowledge and founded on character.

Sir Walter Scott graphically relates the murder of Captain John Porteus in the opening pages of *The Heart of Midlothian*. He paints the picture of a mob which though they seized the gates of Edinburgh, burned down the door of the Tolbooth, ransacked the prison for their victim, and carefully hanged him in the Grassmarket, yet never assaulted a bystander, affronted a lady, or injured a law-officer. Such discipline may err, but it will be spared much disgrace. The citizens of Edinburgh were striking at what they conceived to be the infringement of the law and were animated by a well founded suspicion of the complicity of their duly constituted rulers, but they did not lose their sense of responsibility.

Americans in the 1770's were descendants of the Porteus mob, the Covenanters, the Parliamentarians, adherents of Charles I, victims of the armies of Louis XIV, the Sea Beggars of the Netherlands, all groups that carefully worked out their principles from the Book and expounded them in their legislatures before they took up arms to enforce them, people who only sought freedom under law.

NOTES

1. John H. Hazelton, *The Declaration of Independence, Its History* (N. Y., 1906), pp. 154-155.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 109, p. 414, note 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.
Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, (Washington, 1904-1934), V, 431.
5. There are 100 printed items. In addition there is a large number of personal letters written by clergymen, and a voluminous MS collection.
6. Jonathan Boucher, 1738-1804. *A Letter from a Virginian to the Members of the Congress to be held at Philadelphia on the first of September, 1774* (Boston, 1774), pp. 6-7.
7. John Witherspoon, 1728-1794. Univ. of Edinburgh 1749. "The Druid No. II", *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, June 1776, p. 253.
8. John Wise, 1652-1725. Harvard 1673. *A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches*. (Boston, 1717), p. 61.
9. John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University* (Cambridge, 1933), II, 436.
10. John Carmichael, 1728-1785. Princeton 1759. *A Self-Defensive War Lawful. Sermon preached at Lancaster (Pa.) before Captain Ross's Company of Militia, June 4, 1775* (Phila., 1775), p. 13.
11. "Dialogue on Civil Liberty," *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, April, 1776, p. 158. V. L. Collins, in his *President Witherspoon* (Princeton, 1925), II, 251 lists this (quoting Dr. Ashbel Green) as "written by Dr. Witherspoon and to be based on his lectures".
12. Samuel Lockwood, 1721-1791. Yale 1745. *Civil Rulers an Ordinance of God . . .* (New London, 1774), p. 7. His classmate at Yale was Thomas Bradbury Chandler, a chief advocate of the case for the Crown.
13. Jacob Duché, 1737-1798. Univ. of Pennsylvania 1757. *The Duty of Standing Fast in our Spiritual and Temporal Liberties*. (Phila., 1775), pp. 12-14. This was dedicated to Washington.
14. John Lathrop, 1739-1816. Princeton 1763. *A Sermon preached to the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England, June 6, 1774* (Boston, 1774), pp. 17-18.
15. Dan Foster, 1748-1810. Honorary M.A. degree, Yale and Dartmouth. *A Short Essay on Civil Government. The Substance of Six Sermons, in Windsor, October, 1774* (Hartford, 1775), p. 47.
16. Thomas Bradbury Chandler, 1726-1790. Yale 1745. *The American Querist or, Some Questions Proposed relative to the Present Disputes between Great Britain, and her American Colonies* (N. Y., 1774). Rivington's New-York Gazetteer advertized the first publication and identified Chandler, Rector of St. John's Church, Elizabeth, N. J. as the author on September 15, 1774, p. 3, col. 5.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. Gad Hitchcock, 1719-1803. Harvard 1743. *Sermon preached before his excellency, Thomas Gage, Esq. . . .* (Boston, 1774), p. 23.
19. *An Address of the Presbyterian Ministers of the City of Philadelphia to the Ministers and Presbyterian Congregations in the County of . . . in North Carolina* (Phila., 1775), p. 4. This was by Francis Alison, James Sproat, George Duffield, and Robert Davidson. Francis Alison, 1705-1779, born in Donegal, Ireland, was a student at the University of Glasgow, and came to the Colonies in 1735. He was 70 when the Address was written. For a time he was Principal of the Academy in Philadelphia. Among his students were Charles Thomson, later Secretary of the Continental Congress; John Ewing, who became Provost of the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. David Ramsey, distinguished physician and historian of the American Revolution; Hugh Williamson, a framer of the Constitution; and three signers of the Declaration of Independence. James Sproat, 1722-1793, Yale 1741, was a classmate of Gov. William Livingston of N. J. and of Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport. He was 53 when he signed the Address. George Duffield, 1732-1790, Princeton 1752, was Chaplain to the Continental Congress and a friend and follower of George Whitefield. He was 42 at the time of the Address. Robert Davidson, 1750-1812, University of Pennsylvania 1771, was 24 when the Address was written, and a professor in the University of Pennsylvania.
20. Enoch Huntington, 1735-1809. Yale 1759. *Sermon delivered at Middletown . . . day of public humiliation, fasting and prayer* (Hartford, [1775]), pp. 17-18. Huntington

helped prepare Timothy Dwight for college.

21. Andrew Lee, 1745-1832. Yale 1766. *Sin Destructive of Temporal and Eternal Happiness: and Repentance, Trust in God, and a Vigorous Harmonious, and persevering Opposition, the Duty of a People, when Wicked and Unreasonable Men are Attempting to Enslave them . . .* (Norwich, 1776), pp. 3-4.

For Charles Nisbet, 1736-1804, Univ. of Edinburgh 1754, see "Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution" by Dalphy I. Fagerstrom in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, April 1954, p. 266; *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, ed. L. H. Butterfield (Princeton, 1951); Dr. Samuel Miller's "Memoir of Nisbet" as quoted in W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (N. Y., 1858), III, 450; W. J. Bell, Jr.'s article in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, April 1954, pp. 276-289.

22. Samuel Sherwood, 1730-1783. Yale 1749. *The Church's flight into the Wilderness: an address of the times. Sermon containing some very interesting and important Observations on Scripture Prophecies: Shewing that sundry of them plainly relate to Great-Britain, and the American Colonies; and are fulfilling in the present day* (N. Y., 1776), pp. 5-6, 24-25. Sherwood's mother was Jane Burr, sister of the Rev. Aaron Burr, Sr., President of Princeton, under whom Sherwood completed his theological studies.

23. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, V, 517-518.

Papers of Thomas Jefferson, ed. J. P. Boyd (Princeton, 1950), I, 494-497.

24. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, 1746-1807. Muhlenberg's sermon exists only in tradition. Paul Wallace, in *The Muhlenberg's of Pennsylvania* (1950) gives an account of this.

25. Letter by F. A. Muhlenberg 'written in latter part of 1775 or early in 1776', property of the Trinity Lutheran Church of Reading, Pa. Trans. by the Rev. J. W. Early. A typed copy is in the Library of Congress.

26. Nathaniel Bells, 1710-1786. Harvard 1728. Worked with Eleazer Wheelock to found an Indian school. MS in the New York Historical Society Library.

27. Jonas Clark, 1730-1805. Harvard 1757. *The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors and God's Tender Care of his Distressed People, A Sermon preached at Lexington to commemorate the . . . commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and America . . .* (Boston,

1776), pp. 22-28. Clark was pastor of the church at Lexington, Mass. for 50 years. He had been pastor for 20 years when he saw members of his congregation fall under British gunfire. He had a powerful and agreeable voice and his "full clerical costume of gowns, cassock and bands, and a wig of enormous proportions and snowy whiteness" gave him an appearance of neatness so extreme as to "serve as a perpetual sermon on that graceful virtue." He never preached less than an hour and was known to have prayed for two hours.

28. Judah Champion, 1729-1810. Yale 1751. *Christian and Civil Liberty and Freedom considered and recommended. A sermon delivered before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, May 9, 1776* (Hartford, 1776), pp. 9, 13, 14, 18, 27, 31. Champion held one pastorate at Litchfield, Conn. for 57 years.

29. Samuel West, 1730-1807. Harvard 1754. *A Sermon preached before the Honorable Council and the Honorable House of Representatives of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay . . .* (Boston, 1776), pp. 20-21.

30. *Diary of John Adams*, May 28, 1776, as quoted in Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, I, 425.

31. Jefferson's specifications against the Crown may be read with striking detail in a sermon by Samuel Baldwin, 1731-1784, Harvard 1752, delivered at Plymouth, Dec. 22, 1775, on the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims. (pp. 27-29). "Jurisdictions of certain courts extended beyond their ancient limits. Subjects deprived, in many instances, of their inestimable privileges of trial by a jury of their peers. . . judges . . . rendered totally independent upon the people for their support . . . Humble, importunate and loyal supplications . . . hurled from the throne with the greatest contempt . . . Assemblies frequently, wantonly and arbitrarily dissolved. . . Expensive and oppressive offices have been multiplied . . . To awe the inhabitants to a surrender of their rights, the castle voluntarily surrendered into the hands of our enemy . . . The port of Boston shut up . . . the charter of the province . . . mutilated . . . a murderous law to snatch those bloody villains from the award of justice, who should embrue their hands in the blood of those noble sons of freedom, who might have spirit and courage sufficient to assert and defend their rights . . . Public magazines . . . and private property . . . seized."

32. Witherspoon (See also Note 7) "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men," *Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.* (Phila., 1800), II, 427.

33. Broadside, (Boston, 1766), (No. 10317 in Evans. *American Bibliography*)

34. Jonathan Lee, 1718-1788, Yale 1742. *Sermon delivered before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut* (New London, 1766), p. 18; p. 25, footnote. Lee was pastor at Salisbury, Conn. 44 years.

35. Samuel Langdon, 1723-1797, Harvard 1740. *Government corrupted by Vice, and recovered by Righteousness. A Sermon preached before the Honorable Congress of the Colony . . . assembled at Watertown . . .* (Watertown, 1775), pp. 5-6. Langdon was President of Harvard 1774-1780.

36. Isaac Skillman, 1740-1799, Princeton 1766. *An Oration on the Beauties of Liberty, or the Essential Rights of Americans . . . dedicated to the Right Honorable, the Earl of Dartmouth by a British Bostonian Dec. 3d, 1772.* (Boston, 1773), p. xv. "British Bostonian" has been identified as Isaac Skillman and as John Allen.

37. William Gordon, 1727-1807, Harvard 1772. *A Discourse preached December 15th, 1774. Being the Day recommended by the Provincial Congress; and afterwards at the Boston Lecture* (Boston, 1775), pp. 8-10 note.

38. Lathrop (See also Note 14) *A Discourse preached December 15th, 1774. . . .* (Boston, 1774), p. 25.

39. Oliver Noble, 1734-1792, Yale 1757. *Some Strictures . . . shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God's People: And the remarkable Interposition of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed* (Newburyport, New-England, 1775), p. 26.

40. Skillman, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

41. Stephen Johnson, 1724-1786, Yale 1743. *Integrity and Piety the best Principles of a good Administration of Government. . . . Election Sermon at Hartford, May 10, 1770* (New London, 1770), p. 20. Wm. Gordon, in sermon cited above, p. 11, note, recited the fantastic growth of pensions—1697, seven thousand pounds; 1707, eighteen thousand; 1763, a million and a half. Increase in cost of government is no modern menace to liberty. Our forefathers met it courageously, but none too soon.

42. Benjamin Trumbull, 1735-1820, Yale

1759. *A Discourse delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Freemen of the Town of New-Haven, April 12, 1773* (New Haven, 1773), p. 9. Trumbull's father was a first cousin of Gov. Jonathan Trumbull.

43. Samuel Webster, 1743-1777, Harvard, 1762. *The Misery and Duty of an Appress'd and Enslav'd People, represented in a Sermon delivered at Salisbury July 14, 1774* (Boston, 1774), pp. 23-24.

44. *An Address of the Presbyterian Ministers of the City of Philadelphia to the Ministers and Presbyterian Congregations in the County of . . . in North Carolina* (Phila. 1775), p. 4. See also Note 19.

45. Robert Cooper, 1732-1805, Princeton 1763. *Courage in a Good Cause; or The Lawful and Courageous Use of the Sword. A Sermon, preached near Shippensburg, in Cumberland County, on the 31st of August, 1775, . . . to a large Audience, in which were under Arms, several Companies of Col. Montgomery's Battalion; and Published at their request* (Lancaster, 1775), p. 21.

46. Nathaniel Appleton, 1693-1784, Harvard 1712. *The Right Method of Addressing the Divine Majesty in Prayer; so as to support and strengthen our Faith in Dark and Troublesome times . . . Fast-Day Sermon at the Session of the General Court at Cambridge, April 5, 1770* (Boston, 1770), pp. 35-36. The committee appointed by the House to invite publication of this sermon included Mr. Gardner, Mr. Hancock, and Col. Otis and the minute was signed by Samuel Adams, Clerk. Appleton was pastor at Cambridge, Mass. 67 years.

47. Lathrop (See also Note 14) *Innocent Blood Crying to God from the Streets of Boston. Sermon preached the Sunday after the killing of men on the streets of Boston, March 5th, 1770* (printed in London and reprinted in Boston in 1771), p. iii.

48. Charles Chauncy, 1705-1787, Harvard 1721. *A Letter to a Friend . . . By T. W., A Bostonian* (Boston, N.E., 1774), pp. 4, 22n, 24-26. The letter is dated May 30, 1774. The copy in the New York Public Library has this notation, in a later hand, on the title page next to the pen-name: "Dr. Chauncy, it not being safe to put his name to this piece, the times were such".

49. Champion, op. cit., p. 13.

50. Trumbull, op. cit., p. 19.

51. Webster, op. cit., p. 28.

52. Joseph Lyman, 1749-1828, Yale 1767. *A Sermon preached at Hatfield, Decem-*

ber 15th, 1774, being the day recommended by the Late Provincial Congress; to be observed as a Day of Thanksgiving (Boston, 1775), p. 25.

53. Huntington (See also Note 20) *The Happy Effects of Union. . . . Sermon, preached before the Freeman of the Town of Middletown, April 8, 1776* (Hartford, 1776), p. 19.

54. David McClure, 1748-1820, Yale 1769. MS Sermon in the Dartmouth College Library, delivered at Portsmouth, October 20, 1775. p. 12.

55. John J. Zubly 1724-1781. *The Law of Liberty. A Sermon on American affairs preached at the opening of the Provincial Congress of Georgia. Addressed to the . . . Earl of Dartmouth . . .* (Phila., 1775), p. xiii. The Provincial Congress of Georgia met at Tondee's Long Room in Savannah on July 4, 1775, and after electing Archibald Bullock(h) President, and George Walton, Secretary, adjourned "to the Meeting-House of the Reverend Doctor Zubly where he preached a sermon on the alarming state of American affairs." (Force, *Amer. Arch.* 4th Series, II, 1543) The Address to Lord Dartmouth, bound with the printed sermon, bears the date of September 3, 1775).

56. Joseph Perry 1731-1783, Harvard 1752. *A Sermon, preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, May 11, 1775* (Hartford, 1775), p. 7.

57. Hazelton, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

58. Nathaniel Niles, 1741-1828, Princeton 1776. *Two Discourses on Liberty delivered at the North Church, in Newbury-port, on Lord's Day, June 5th, 1774 . . .* (Newbury-port, 1774), pp. 37-38. Niles was a preacher, but never ordained.

59. Carl Sandburg. *Abraham Lincoln, The War Years* (N.Y., 1939), IV 94.

60. Witherspoon (See also Note 7) "The Druid No. II," *The Pennsylvania Magazine*, June 1776, p. 256.

61. Levi Hart, 1738-1808, Yale 1760. *Liberty Described and Recommended in a Sermon preached to the Corporation of Freeman in Farmington . . . September 20, 1774* (Hartford, 1775), p. 16. Hart was pastor at Griswold, Conn. 47 years.

62. Daniel Byrnes, *A Short Address to the English Colonies in North America* (Wilmington, Sixth Month 20th, 1775), Broad-side (Evans 13859).

63. James Horrocks, 1734-1772, Trinity, Cambridge, 1755. *Upon the Peace. A Sermon Preach'd at the Church at Petsworth in the County of Gloucester, on August the 25th [1763]* (Williamsburg, 1763), pp. 7-8.

64. Skillman. op. cit., pp. 73-80.

65. The pattern of religious affiliation in Virginia may be seen from the following record of church planting.

	Episco- palian	Presby- terian	Bap- tist
Before 1700	55	2	0
1700-1760	40	31	5
1760-1776	18	53	85

66. Militia Rolls and Churches of

Virginia County	Quota	Churches	Denomination
Accomac	1208	3	P 2E
Albemarle	1270	10	2B 5P 3E
Amelia	1150	1	E
Amherst	650	2	P E
E. Augusta	2000	7	B 5P E
Bedford	1400	3	2P E
Botetourt	1600	12	3B 8P E
Brunswick	1200	3	B 2E
Buckingham	650	5	2B 2P E
Berkeley	1200	19	Mor 5GR 3B 9P E
Caroline	983	6	3B 3E
Charles City	350	1	E
Charlotte	812	5	2B P 2E
Chesterfield	960	4	2B 2E
Culpepper	1400	10	L 7B 2E
Cumberland	1000	4	3P E
Dinwiddie	700	5	3B 2E
Dunmore	500		
& Mennonites	2		Men
Eliz. City	160	2	P E
Essex	450	5	3B 2E
Fairfx	1000	6	3B P 2E
Fauquier	1100	8	2GR 4B 2E
Frederic	1264	21	2L 5GR 4B 8P 2E
Fincastle	2000	13	3GR 2B 7P E
Gloster	900	3	3E
Goochland	520	6	4B 2E
Halifax	1000	7	6B E
Hampshire	700	3	2P E
Hanover	900	4	B P 2E
Henrico	500	2	B E
James City	190	3	B 2E
Isle of Wight	725	3	2B E
K. George	450	3	3E
K & Queen	600	5	3B 2E
K. William	500	3	B 2E
Lancaster	200	2	P E
Loudoun	1600		
& Quakers	8		GR 4B P 2E
Louisa	600	3	B P E
Lunenburg	593	3	2B E
Middlesex	300	1	E
Mecklenburgh	850	4	3B E
Nansemond	800	2	2E
N. Kent	448	2	2E

Norfolk	1000	4	M 3E
Northampton		1	E
Northumberland	700	2	2E
Orange	550	5	L GR 2B E
Pittsylvania	1550	8	4B 3P E
Pr. Edward	550	9	3B 5P E
Pr. George	450	1	E
Prss. Anne	450	2	B E
Pr. William	1000	2	B E
Richmond	470	2	2E
Southampton	750	2	2E
Spotsylvania	500	6	L 3B 2E
Stafford	500	2	B E
Surry	350	1	E
Sussex	660	4	3B E
Warwick	100	1	E
Westmoreland	700	2	2E
York	300	3	3E

Denominational distribution: B—Baptist; E—Episcopal; GR—German Reformed; L—Lutheran; Men—Mennonite; Mor—Moravian; P—Presbyterian

Papers of Thomas Jefferson I, 579; Frederick Lewis Weis, *Colonial Churches and the Colonial Clergy of the Middle and Southern Colonies 1607-1776* (Lancaster, Mass., 1938), passim.

67. *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1706-1788* (Phila., [1853]) p. 456.

68. Edward A. Park, D.D., *Memoir of the Life and Character of Samuel Hopkins, D.D., 1721-1803, Yale 1741* (2nd ed. Boston, 1854), p. 129.

69. *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795, Yale 1746*, ed. F. B. Dexter (N.Y., 1901), I, 363. Stiles was President of Yale 1778-1795.

70. Park, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

71. *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, etc., pp. 456, 458, 459.

72. Ibid., p. 487.

73. Stiles, op. cit., I, 486.

74. Sherwood (See also Note 22) *A Sermon Containing Scriptural Instructions to Civil Rulers and all Free-born Subjects. In which the Principles of sound Policy and good Government are established and vindicated; and some Doctrines advanced and zealously propagated by New-England Tories, are considered and refuted. Delivered at a public fast August 31, 1774. With an Address to the Freemen of the Colony . . . Also an Appendix stating the heavy grievances the Colonies labour under . . .*

by the Rev. Ebenezer Baldwin, of Danbury (New Haven, [1774]), p. 78.

75. Carl Becker, *The Declaration of Independence* (N.Y., 1942), pp. 212-214.

76. Hazelton, op. cit., pp. 171, 178.

77. Justin Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America* (Boston, 1889) VI, 239n.

78. B. J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (N.Y., 1855), II, 73 note.

79. Clap, Thomas 1703-1767, Harvard 1722. *Catalogue of books in the library of Yale College in New Haven* with "advertisement to the students" by T. Clap (New Haven, 1755). Sets of John Rushworth's *Historical Collections* are also found listed in other 18th century book catalogues, viz, Harvard College, 1723; The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1757.

80. *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, I, 106.

81. This is called the "Rough Draft", a facsimile of which may be seen bound into *The Declaration of Independence* by Hazelton, at p. 144. A valuable monograph by Julian P. Boyd, *The Declaration of Independence* (Washington, 1943) gives a critical analysis of the text as it moved through various stages. Carl Becker's *The Declarations of Independence* is a more popular account which has appeared in various printings.

82. Niles, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

83. Webster, op. cit., p. 31.

84. Perry, op. cit., p. 10.

85. Nathan Perkins, 1748-1838, Princeton 1770. *A Sermon preached to the Soldiers who went from West-Hartford in Defence of their Country, delivered the 2d of June, 1775. Being the Day before they marched from that Place* (Hartford, [1775]) p. 12. Perkins preached 10,000 sermons and prepared 150 young men for college.

86. *A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia To the Congregations under their Care; to be read from the Pulpits on Thursday, June 29, 1775, being the Day of the General Fast* (N.Y., 1775). The letter was signed by Benjamin Hait, the Moderator, May 22, 1775 at New York. John Witherpoon was named on the committee which drafted the Pastoral Letter. *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, etc. p. 463.

87. David Jones, 1736-1820, Hopewell Academy, N. J. *Defensive War in a Just Cause Sinless. A Sermon preached . . . at Tredyffryn, in Chester County (Pa.) July 20, 1775* (Phila., 1775), p. 20. Jones was a frontier missionary.

88. Cooper, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT
OF THE
COLONIAL CLERGY

Readings from the sermons, letters,
pamphlets and communications to
newspapers by the Clergymen of the
British Colonies in America between
1750 and 1787.

Edited by
STEWART M. ROBINSON



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*No property is safe where it is large enough to tempt the
cupidity of indigent power—*EDMUND BURKE

FOREWORD

"It is now said, and there is indeed a precedent that gives a colourable pretext for such an assertion, that all resistance to established authority becomes, *ipso facto*, criminal; and while the true friend of liberty deplores the enormities, the pander of arbitrary power rejoices in the history, of the French Revolution. It furnishes the latter with a pretext to prove his favorite position, that no nation is to be entrusted with the government of itself: it serves to consecrate any tyranny on the part of the rulers, and any state of servile acquiescence on the part of the people. To this example, however, the former may proudly oppose the history of the American revolution; it was a revolution in favour of a free government; it was a revolution in favour of that law, that had been handed down to us as an invaluable legacy by our ancestors; it was a revolution that preserved to the Colonies, under another name, the rights secured by Magna Charta. Astonishing as the fact may appear, it is nevertheless true, that so little did the Americans contend for, beyond what was secured to them in the grant of their royal charter, that some of them have preserved those very charters to the present day, notwithstanding they have renounced the authority of the Monarch by whom they were granted. Others have, in the constitutions that have been subsequently framed under the name of the people, recognized and adopted all those rights guaranteed by the royal charters; and even at the present day, the constitution of the United States, and the constitutions of the several States, have only given to those chartered rights a new name. The People now speak in their collective majesty, where a Monarch, in his individual majesty, formerly spoke; and the lips of both utter precisely the same sentiments—so false was the opinion preva-

lent in the day of our revolution, that our ancestors were rebels.”

(A History of the American Revolution etc. by Paul Allen, Esq., Baltimore: Printed for Franklin Betts. Wm. Woody, Jr., Printer. 1822. Vol. I, pp. iv and v.)

While men who had taken part in the great emancipation were still living, judicious historians, correctly discerned that the American Revolution was not an attempt to overthrow authority, but rather to establish it upon its own constitutional foundation.

The French Revolution offers an example of a revolution which sought to overturn the constitutional establishment and *de novo* create something different. However sound may have been the instincts which drove men to kill Louis XVI, they were not the instincts which cost the life of Charles I., nor which precipitated the independence of the British Colonies in America and the establishment of the United States of America. In France we have a philosophical pursuit of a theory; in Britain and in the Colonies we have an appeal to ‘the Law and the Testimony’. Condorcet, Robespierre and Marat said, ‘rewrite the law’; The Adamsses, Hancock, Witherspoon said, ‘obey the law’.

The following pages attempt to put down, from the writings of the Colonial Clergy, relevant passages which illustrate their political thinking during the course of the four decades prior to 1790. More precisely the years covered in this survey embrace the period 1750 - 1787. That the clergy made an influential element in the colonial scene is freely admitted. It ought also to be said that their interests were not at all primarily political. John Witherspoon, one of the foremost, both as a minister and as a political leader declared that only twice in his life had he ever taken the subject of politics into the pulpit at the worship on the Lord’s Day.

Quotations from the clergymen of the Colonies are mostly extremely brief and fragmentary. Unfortunately in this work they are still briefer than the editor wishes, but deference must be paid to space and time, even at the cost of omitting passages of great intrinsic worth. However, the present arrangement is designed to focus attention upon the writer and the date of his pronouncement, so that the inquirer may see the trend of thought, and mark what individuals said.

The full title of the sermon or pamphlet is given with the location of a contemporary copy. The sermon text is given in italics. These sermons, even though 'political' were definitely expositions of Scripture. Much of the theological dissection of the text and context have been stripped away in these readings. Possibly the hearts of the original hearers were more edified by what has here been omitted. It is hoped that interest evoked may send some readers to peruse the whole of many of these noble discourses. Summaries have been provided of the parts quoted by the editor. These are his, not the authors, inserted for the convenience of the reader and subject to attack by anyone who deems them improper conclusions. Every sermon abstracted has been read in its entirety, more than once. The excerpts have been chosen in the light of the whole discourse. They have also been chosen with the design to give as much variety as possible. Some sentiments could be quoted from scores of preachers. So far as possible the effort has been made to select passages which are somewhat distinctive of the man and the occasion. Where a comparatively short quotation comes from an obviously long original, the explanation is that the original was more full of Scriptural exposition, or the content more in line with what is elsewhere quoted from other writers. Then too, special attention has been devoted to voices not so well known to our later generations. It is fitting, however, that the first quotation in the period selected should come from Jonathan Mayhew whose name is perhaps best remembered by historians.

No special pains have been taken to identify the denominational group to which the clergy belonged. It may come out in connection with the statements quoted or in the foot-notes attached. This is not done with any bias against the noble loyalties of the men, rather to emphasize a striking catholicity of sentiment, and that, in an age when denominational lines were sharply drawn. On the other hand, some of the most vital political implications came out through controversies which were originally religious in character, and some of the great principles of civil government were hammered out in the conclaves of churches. This is reflected in the pages that follow.

It is hoped that what follows may help the modern reader to make an appraisal of the influence of men whose ministry for God and country helped make strong national foundations.

Jonathan Mayhew

January 30, 1749/1750

SUMMARY

THE PREACHER'S RIGHT AND DUTY TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL DISCUSSION FROM THE PULPIT—FREEDOM OF SPEECH—LIMITATIONS TO EXECUTIVE POWER—THE RULER MUST BE THE KIND GOD APPROVES TO MERIT OBEDIENCE—RESISTANCE TO REASONABLE AUTHORITY CONDEMNED BY THE APOSTLE—MAGISTRATE HAS TO DEMONSTRATE HIS CONFORMITY TO DIVINE PATTERN TO JUSTIFY HIS AUTHORITY OVER PEOPLE—FOR THE PEOPLE TO FAIL TO RESIST THE ENCROACHMENT OF UNLAWFUL POWER WOULD BE TO AID IN THE ENSLAVING OF MEN WHICH IS CONTRARY TO GOD'S WILL FOR GOVERNMENT

. . . "all scripture—is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for CORRECTION, for instruction in righteousness." Why, then, should not those parts of scripture which relate to

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING UNLIMITED SUBMISSION AND NON-RESISTANCE TO THE HIGHER POWERS:

With some Reflections on the Resistance made to King Charles I. And on the Anniversary of his Death: In which the Mysterious Doctrine of that Prince's Saintship and Martyrdom is unriddled: The Substance of which was delivered in a Sermon preached in the West Meeting-House in Boston the Lord's Day after the 30th of January 1749/1750. Published at the Request of the Hearers. By JONATHAN MAYHEW, A.M., Pastor of the West Church in Boston. Boston, Printed and Sold by D. Fowle in Queen Street; and by D. Gookin over against the South Meeting-House. 1750. 55 pp.

Copy in the New York Public Library
TEXT OF SERMON: *Romans* 13:1-8.
"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive

to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour."

JONATHAN MAYHEW was born on Martha's Vineyard in 1720, graduated from Harvard in 1744 and Ordained in the West Church Boston in 1747. The University of Aberdeen granted him the S.T.D. in 1749. News of this honor had not reached him when this sermon was sent to the printer. He died in 1766. See Frederick L. Weis: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936 p. 138.

civil government, be examined and explained from the desk, as well as others? Obedience to the civil magistrate is a christian duty: and if so, why should not the nature, grounds, and extent of it be considered in a christian assembly? Besides, if it be said, that it is out of character for a christian minister to meddle with such a subject, this censure will at last fall upon the holy apostles. They write upon it in their epistles to christian churches: And surely it cannot be deemed either criminal or impertinent, to attempt an explanation of their doctrine. (*p. 1 of Preface*) . . . GOD be thanked one may, in any part of the *british* dominions, speak freely (if a decent regard be paid to those in authority) both of government and religion; and even give some broad hints, that he is engaged on the side of Liberty, the BIBLE, and Common Sense, in opposition to Tyranny, PRIEST-CRAFT and Nonsense, without being in danger either of the *bastile* or the *inquisition*:—Though there will always be *some* interested politicians, contracted bigots, and hypocritical zealots for a party, to take offence at such freedoms. *Their* censure is praise: *Their* praise is infamy— . . . (*p. 2 of Preface*)

But who supposes that the apostle ever intended to teach, that children, servants and wives, should, in all cases whatever, obey their parents, masters and husbands respectively, never making any opposition to their will, even although they should require them to break the commandments of God, or should causelessly make an attempt upon their lives? No one puts such a sense upon these expressions, however absolute and unlimited. (*p. 16*) . . . it will not follow that because civil government, is, in general, a good institution, and necessary to the peace and happiness of human society, therefore there are no supposeable cases in which resistance to it can be innocent. (*p. 19*)

AND if we attend to the nature of the argument with which the apostle here inforces the duty of submission to *the higher powers*, we shall find it to be such an one as concludes not in favor of submission to all who bear the *title* of rulers, in common; but only, to those who *actually* perform the duty of rulers by exercising a reasonable and just authority, for the good of human society. (*p. 20*)

—If those who bear the title of civil rulers, do not perform the duty of civil rulers, but act directly counter to the sole end and design of their office; if they/injure and oppress their subjects, instead of defending their rights and doing

them good; they have not the least pretence to be honoured, obeyed and rewarded, according to the apostle's argument. (*p.* 22/23)

. . . the apostle argues, that those who resist a reasonable and just authority, which is agreeable to the will of God, do really resist the will of God himself; and will, therefore, be punished by him. But how does this prove, that those who resist a lawless, unreasonable power, which is contrary to the will of God, do therein resist the will and ordinance of God? Is resisting those who resist God's will, the same thing with resisting God? (*p.* 25)

But if magistrates are unrighteous; if they are *respecters of persons*; if they are partial in their administration of justice; then those who do well have as much reason to *be afraid*, as those that do evil: there can be no safety for the good, nor any peculiar ground of terror to the unruly and injurious. So that, in this case, the main end of civil government will be frustrated. And what reason is there for submitting to that government, which does by no means answer the design of government? (*p.* 26)

Not to discontinue our allegiance, in this case, would be to join with the sovereign in promoting the slavery and misery of that society, the welfare of which, we ourselves, as well as our sovereign, are indispensably obliged to secure and promote, as far as in us lies. (*p.* 30)

And if any officers in a kingly government, go beyond the limits of that power which they have derived from the crown, (the supposed original source of all power and authority in the state) and attempt, illegally, to take away the properties and lives of their fellow-subjects, they may be *forcibly* resisted, at least till application can be made to the crown. But as to the sovereign himself, he may not be resisted in any case; nor any of his officers, while they confine themselves within the bounds which he has prescribed to them. This is, I think, a true sketch of the principles of those who defend the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. (*p.* 32)

Noah Hobart

May 10, 1750

SUMMARY

SOCIAL LIFE ORDAINED BY GOD—FORM OF GOVERNMENT DIFFERS WITH NATIONS—TYPE DEPENDS ON SECONDARY CAUSES FOR GOD HAS ORDAINED NO SPECIFIC TYPE—NO SPECIES ENJOYS A 'DIVINE RIGHT'—END OF GOVERNMENT IS TO MAKE PERSONS 'SAFE, EASY AND SECURE'—AND INCLUDE 'LIFE, LIBERTY, REPUTATION, EASE'—INTENT OF LAWS—TYRANNY INCONSISTENT WITH WILL OF GOD—SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BEST EXPRESSED BY MAXIM 'HE SERVES HIMSELF AND SERVES THE PUBLIC'—GOVERNMENT DEPENDS ON TAXES—WHICH MUST COME FROM PRODUCERS—WHO MAY FIND THEMSELVES SUPPORTING PARASITES IN IDLENESS AND VICES

IT is evidently agreeable to the will of God, the Sovereign Ruler of the World, that men whom He has made sociable Creatures, should live in Communities, and enjoy the Bene-

CIVIL GOVERNMENT THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL HAPPINESS

A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the Day of their Anniversary Election, May 10th 1750 By NOAH HOBART, A.M., Pastor of the Church of Christ in Fairfield. N.London, Printed and Sold by T.Green, Printer to the Governor & Company 1751. 52 p. Copy in the New York Public Library
TEXT OF SERMON: *Psalm 11:3—"If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the Righteous do?"*

NOAH HOBART was born at Hingham, Mass. in 1706 (1705 Old Style), graduated from Harvard in 1724 and settled in Fairfield, Conn. Here he ministered the rest of his life, 1733-1773. See Frederick L. Weis; *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. p. 108.

ELECTION SERMONS were preached in Connecticut from 1674. Each year's session of the legislature was opened with public worship at which a sermon was preached by invitation. The Charter provided for the annual convening of the legislature as follows: ". . . And

we do hereby, for us, our heirs, and successors, establish and ordain. That once in the year, for ever hereafter, namely the said second Thursday in May, the governor, deputy governor, and assistants of the said company, and other officers of the said company, or such of them as the said general assembly shall think fit, shall be, in the said general court and assembly, to be held from that day or time, newly chosen for the year ensuing, by such greater part of the said company, for the time being then and there present." Charter granted to the Colony of Connecticut by King Charles II. in the Fourteenth Year of his Reign (July 8, 1663). The Charters of the British Colonies in America. London: Printed for J. Almon, opposite Burlington-House, in Piccadilly (1775) p. 27). See also A Check List of New England Election Sermons by R. W. G. Vail, American Antiquarian Society reprint, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1936. p. 3). Also *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* etc. by William Gordon, D.D., Third American Edition, New York 1801 Vol. I, p. 36)

fits and Advantages that are peculiar to the *Social* Life. This cannot possibly be effected without erecting and supporting Civil Government . . . (*p.* 1)

. . . it must be owned that there is that Difference, perhaps in the very Constitution and Genius of different Nations, or certainly in their Condition and Circumstances, as renders one Form of Government most suitable to one Nation, and best adapted to promote it's Happiness; while another Form shall best answer the great Ends of Government with a different People. It has not pleased God to interpose in this Case, by instituting one Form of Civil Government and obliging all Nations to submit to it; and therefore though Government in general must be owned as a Divine Institution, yet no one particular Species of it as opposed to another, can justly claim the Honour of Subsisting by a strictly *Divine Right*. Whether we consult the Light of Nature or Revelation, we shall find Reason to conclude that all regular Forms of Civil Administration, so far as they answer the Intentions of Government, are equally agreeable to the Will of God. And perhaps, if our Views were sufficiently extended, we should see that the Good of the whole World is best promoted, and the Grand Scheme of Divine Providence in the Government of it, most effectually carried on, while diverse Nations are under different Forms of Civil Government. (*pp.* 2/3)

CIVIL Government is the Foundation of Social Happiness as it is designed and suited to render men safe, easy and secure in their *Persons*.

THERE are many Things relating to men's Persons, of such a Nature and Importance that they cannot be *happy*, nor indeed so much as *comfortable* without having some Security for the quiet Possession, and Enjoyment of them. Of this kind are Life, Liberty, Reputation, Ease and the like . . . (*p.* 6/7)

GOVERNMENT is designed and suited to defend men in the Enjoyment of these personal Rights, which are so essential to Social Happiness. Laws are made to curb the unruly Passions of men, and prevent their wounding the Persons or Reputations of their Neighbors, their depriving them of Life, Ease or Liberty. The Magistrate has just Authority, to punish the Transgressors of these wholesome Laws, and to proportion the Punishment to the Injury done, and to the necessary Intention of deterring others from

doing the like. A strict and impartial Administration of Justice in these Cases, is the greatest Political Security against the Perpetration and Increase of Crimes of this Kind; and consequently tends to render every Member of the Community secure and safe in the Possession of Life and Liberty, Reputation and Ease. And Civil Government considered as intended and adapted to protect men in these Respects, deserves to be called the Foundation of Social Happiness; and, when duly administer'd, it is a very firm and solid Foundation. (*p.* 9)

TYRANNY, whether natural to the Constitution of a Government or owing to Corruption in the Administration, is utterly inconsistent with Social Happiness. (*p.* 11)

EVERY Member of a Community is obliged to contribute, in his Station, to the good of the whole, and every industrious, frugal Man does so; he serves himself, and he serves the Public at the same Time. Whatever any man gains by honest Labour, is just so much gained to the Society of which he is a Member: And on the contrary Idleness in particular Persons is prejudicial to the Public; there is at least the Loss of what the Community might have been benefitted by their Labour. (*p.* 19)

The most valuable members of Society must, in such Circumstances, bear a very heavy Burthen: The Public must be supported by laying severe Taxes on useful Arts and painful Labour, that the luxurious and intemperate, useless and even hurtful Members of the Community, may gratify their Corruptions at the cheaper Rate. He that has been endeavouring by honest Labour, to make Provision for his own Family, shall find himself oppressed by being obliged to support the Children of his Neighbor, reduced to Nakedness and Starving by the Idleness, Extravagance, or Drunkenness of their Parents. (*p.* 23)

Samuel Phillips

May 30, 1750

SUMMARY

THE LAW OF NATURE IS THE LAW OF GOD—RULERS
AS OTHERS SHOULD KNOW THE BIBLE—KEEP PUBLIC
FAITH—DISCHARGE PUBLIC DEBT—LET NONE SUFFER
DAMAGE FOR LENDING TO GOVERNMENT—HONEST
MONEY—SOUND MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE—'LEVELISM'
IN DEFIANCE OF GOD AND REASON—A PRAYER FOR
GOD'S BLESSING TO LATEST GENERATION

. . . this Law of Nature is no other but the *Law of GOD*.
(p. 7)

—Every Man, and every *Ruler* in particular, shou'd be well
acquainted with his BIBLE, and improve the same as the
Man of his Counsel. (p. 11)

And not only should good Laws be provided, but it is
also the unquestionable Duty of a Legislature to *keep* the
public Faith, and fulfill the public Promise, as near as
possible: And to take Care to *discharge the public Debt*,
as soon as may be: And to see that *no Person* suffers
Damage, by reason of his having served, or for his having
credited the Public. (p. 13)

That it belongs to the *Legislative* Powers to take the most
effectual Care, that so, the true and certain *Value* of the
Medium, which is current among their People, *may be*
preserv'd invariable; that so they may have a sure Rule
and Standard to guide them (continually) in their Com-
merce, and for the Prevention of Fraud and Oppression.
(p. 14)

. . . the Notion of *Levelism* is not only a Defiance to the
Will and *Wisdom* of CHRIST, but also contradicts the
Reason and Experience of Mankind in general. (p. 28)
O, that *This* GOD, may still be NEW-ENGLAND'S GOD!
And as *He* was with our Fathers, so may *He* be with us
and with our Children, and Children's Children, even to
the latest generation! (p. 59)

POLITICAL RULERS AUTHORIZ'D AND INFLUENC'D BY GOD OUR SAVIOUR, TO DECREE AND EXECUTE JUSTICE: A Sermon Preached at Boston: In the Audience of His Honour Spencer Phips, Esq; Commander in Chief; The Honourable His Majesty's Council, And the Honourable House of Representatives, Of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, On May 30th, 1750. Being the Anniversary for the Election of His Majesty's Council for the said Province. By Samuel Phillips, A.M. And Pastor of the South-Church in Andover. Boston; New-England: Printed by John Draper, Printer to His Honour the Lieutenant Governour and Council. 1750. 59 pp. (Copy in The New York Public Library)

TEXT OF SERMON: *Proverbs 8:15, 16* — "*By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice: By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the earth.*"

SAMUEL PHILLIPS was born at Salem, Mass. in 1691 (1690 Old Style), and graduated from Harvard 1708. He was ordained and settled at Andover, Mass. as the first pastor of the South or Second Church. Here he labored from 1710 for sixty-one years until his death in 1771. See Frederick L. Weis: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. p. 164.

ELECTION SERMONS were preached in Massachusetts from 1634. The first known printed example belongs to 1661. The Charter of the Colony provided for an annual meeting of the assembly of chosen freeholders, and this body voted to invite a minister to preach before it and the other assembled dignitaries. Upon completing his task, the clergyman was invited to allow the sermon to be printed. The Charter provision for the Annual Election runs as follows:-

"And our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby for us, our heires and successours establish and ordaine, That yearly once

establish and ordaine, That yearly once in the yeare forever hereafter, namely the last Wednesday in Easter terme yearly, the Governour, deputy Governour and Assistants of the said Companie, and all other officers of the said Companie shall be in the generall court or assemblie, to be held for that day or time, newly chosen for the yeare ensuing by such greater part of the said Companie for the time being, then and there present, as is aforesaid." (Charter of Charles I. (1644) (See The Charters of the British Colonies in America. London: Printed for J. Almon, opposite Burlington-House, in Piccadilly. (1775) p. 57)

The Charter of William and Mary runs thus: "And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do ordain and grant, That there shall and may be convened, held, and kept by the governor, for the time being, upon every last Wednesday in the month of May, every year for ever, and at all such other times as the governor of our said province shall think fit and appoint, a great and general court or assembly; which said great and general court or assembly shall consist of the governor and council, or assistants, for the time being, and such free-holders of our said province or territory, as shall be, from time to time, elected or deputed by the major part of the free-holders, and other inhabitants of the respective towns and places, who shall be present at such elections; each of the said towns and places being hereby impowered to elect and depute two persons, and no more, to serve for, and represent them respectively in the said great and general court or assembly. (The Charters of the British Colonies in America. London: Printed for J. Almon, opposite Burlington-House, in Picadilly. (1775) pp. 12-13) (See also A Check List of New England Election Sermons by R. W. G. Vail. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., 1936) p. 13ff.

Samuel Maxwell

1750

SUMMARY

AN EXPOSTULATION AGAINST THE ASSUMPTION BY A LIMITED NUMBER TO DETERMINE GENERAL POLICY APART FROM A CANVASS OF THE WHOLE CONSTITUENCY—

Besides we pray you to consider what was the good old Way of your Church, which is mention'd in the Preface to your Proposals: We are very sure it was not the Way of such rigid Separation; it was all along the Practice for the Members of the Church to use the Liberty of such occasional Communion. We hope you will not depart from the good old Way, without Scripture Ground, nor suffer the Humours or Prejudices of a few, to controul and change the avowed Principles, and constant Practice of the Church, from the beginning from its first gathering. You have now above threescore Years maintained a noble Testimony against rigid Separation, and that under trying Circumstances; and we hope, that now at last you will suffer no Man to take your Crown. (*p.* 9)

. . . we pray you to consider what Effect the Voting this Proposal, as it now stands, must have on your Members who live at a Distance from you. Consider whether it is likely they will be willing to be concluded by such a Vote . . . (*p.* 10)

. . . this Rule will put it into the Power of any weak or wilful Brother to controul the Principles and Practices of the whole Church in any other Article; or rather, it will at once destroy all Rule and Order, as it will be impossible to humour or satisfy all the disagreeing and inconsistent Scruples and Doubts that may be entertained. (*p.* 11)

THE CASE AND COMPLAINT of Mr. Samuel Maxwell, Pastor of a Church of Christ. In Rehoboth, of the Baptist Denomination. Newport, Rhode-Island: Printed by James Franklin, at the Printing Office at the Town-School-House. 1750. 25 pp. (Copy in The Connecticut Historical Society). SAMUEL MAXWELL was born at Boston in 1688. He was ordained minister

at the Swansea Church in 1733. He remained there until 1739 when he became a Seventh Day Baptist. In 1745 he returned to his former fellowship and served churches at Rehoboth, Mass. and Block Island, R. I. He died in 1778. See Frederick L. Weis: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. p. 138.

Benjamin Lord

May 9, 1751

SUMMARY

GOD MADE MAN FOR SOCIETY—DEPRAVED NATURE OF MAN FURTHER NEED FOR SOCIETY—NATURAL RIGHT SURRENDERED FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING—IN WHICH LIFE AND PROPERTY OF INDIVIDUAL IS FIRST BENEFICIARY—RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST BEST FRIEND TO GOVERNMENT—BAD RELIGION LEADS TO BAD GOVERNMENT—BAD MEN MAKE BAD GOVERNMENT—FANATICISM—CIVIL LEGISLATION SHOULD CONFORM TO DIVINE LAW—SOUND MONEY ONLY SAFE BASIS FOR GOVERNMENT—SCRIPTURE AND REASON THE TEST—LIVES LIBERTIES AND ESTATES ITS END—FREEDOM OF RELIGION—RELIGION NEVER ANTAGONISTIC TO GOVERNMENT—MODERATION—GOOD MEN, GOOD MEASURES—HONESTY WITH GOD AND MAN—PAPER MONEY—PUBLIC CREDIT

THE great Author of Nature, hath form'd and design'd his Creature Man for Society, both Civil and Religious; which, as it is agreeable to his very Make, and necessary to his present State; so, is adapted to his multifarious Advantage: Inso much, that any manner of Conduct, which expresseth a Man's mind to live by himself, abstract from any Relation to Society; or to Worship only by himself and not with others; or that shews a thought, as if he could be safe and happy alone, Independant on Community; is a Contradiction to the design of the Creator in ranking him with the humane Species, & to the Constitution & Wants of such a kind of Creature. (1,2)

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT
SUBSISTING TOGETHER IN SOCIETY. NECESSARY TO THEIR
COMPLEAT HAPPINESS AND SAFETY. A Sermon Delievered in the Audience of the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, on their Anniversary Election at Hartford, May 9th, 1751, By Benjamin Lord, A.M. Pastor of a Church of Christ in Norwich. New-London, Printed and Sold by Timothy Green, Printer to the Gov. & Company. 1752 63 pp.

(Copy in The New York Public Library)

TEXT OF SERMON: *Psalm 122:4-5*—
"Whither the tribes go up, the Tribes
of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel,

to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For there are set Thrones of Judgment; the Thrones of the House of David."

BENJAMIN LORD was born at Saybrook, Conn. in 1694 and graduated from Yale in 1714. After teaching in the college for two years he took up his life work at Norwich, Conn. where he served from 1717 until his death in 1784. Yale gave him the degree of S.T.D. in 1774, and he was a trustee 1740-1772. See Frederick L. Weis: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. pp. 128-129.

. . . Men were not design'd for an *Unsocial Life*, and especially with their present depraved Powers, are by no means, to remain in a *State of Nature*; each one to possess by himself, and use for himself his natural Rights & Liberties, without any borrowed Strength and Advantage from others by Compact: i.e. without Incorporating into Society, or having any known established Laws and Rules agreed upon, as a common Standard to govern the whole; or any supream Head or known acknowledged Rulers and Officers to keep the whole in a just Decorum; and that for the general Peace and Safety of them all. (2)

. . . as it is fitting; so, indeed necessary now, that Men's natural Rights be given up to Community, whereby those may be exercised for the good of everyone; as they cannot be, while in the Hands of Individuals themselves; for, the Strength of each particular Person being giv'n up to Society and lodg'd with this collective Body, for common Benefit: Every Member may have the Strength of the whole employed for the Security of his own Life and Property. And also rejoyce in his Neighbours having the same Protection and Advantage with himself: So that, the Privileges of Society must be vastly greater than all the Rights of Nature separately Consider'd and Used. This, (it seems) is very plain. (p. 3)

. . . an Established civil Government by a divine Constitution, and Settled by God . . . (p. 7)

. . . *The Religion of Jesus Christ* . . . is the best Friend to civil Government of any scheme of Religion at all: As it is best Calculated and Fitted to/Guide us into the way of Universal Righteousness: The Principles and Laws of it, being most perfectly Adapted to the good Regulation of Individuals and Communities in all things, that affect their Duty and Happiness. (p. 10/11)

. . . In whatever proportion Mens Notions of Religion and Christianity, are false, in the same they themselves will likely transgress the Rules thereof; and so fail of that Virtue, Self-denial, Meekness, Constancy, public Spiritedness & Benevolence which are repeatedly Recommended, in the Gospel: And so of course, disturb the Peace & Happiness of the Community, they belong unto. (p. 13)

. . . The Sounder men are really, in their Faith and fettled Principles of Conduct, the more likely to live well; and the better they Live, the better Members of Society they always

are. . . . to Talk of mens being good Members hereof, let their Principles with regard to Religion, be what they will; or let them have Religion, or no Religion, is to divide what God himself hath put together. And how can it be expected, that People will *lead quiet and peaceable Lives*, under the best model'd Government, and the wisest Administrations thereof, if they be not influenced by *Godliness and Honesty*. (p. 15)

. . . Enthusiasm always makes men so Confident of their being right in their Opinion & Conduct, that no room must be given for sober Examination. (p. 19)

. . . it is always the Duty of the civil Legislature to conform to the Word of God (the great Standard of Truth, and Measure of Right and Wrong) in all their Laws, of however minute consequence. (p. 24)

. . . all Precepts & Orders with respect to Merchandize & Trade, and the Medium thereof should be in a strict Conformity to the fundamental Laws of Justice and Equity. This, being the Bottom, on which only the State can safely stand. Yea, in every Act of the Legislature, utmost Care must be had, that there be no Unrighteousness and Oppression bor'n with, much less countenanced and encouraged by public Authority. (p. 25)

The great Design of mens coming *into Society*, and making up one civil Polity, is the preservation of their Property, which in the *State of Nature*, they could not Singly, and each one by himself Defend. Now, a meerly Arbitrary Government, is contrary to this End, and tends directly to the destruction of the Body Politick, the very Result of Tyranny, that is an Exercising of Power, beyond Authority, which cannot point at any thing short of the Ruin of the Republic. (p. 26)

. . . It seems, that all civil Government of the right Stamp, must be agreeable to Scripture and Reason, and so to the Nature and Ends of a civil Community, the Preservation of the Lives, Liberties & Estates of all the Members thereof, against the force of Rapine, Injustice & all manner of destructive Violence. (p. 28)

. . . it is necessary that a Community have *Virtue and Religion* prevailing in it as well as *Government* Administered therein, to render it Happy. (p. 32)

Indeed, such a kind of Government, and Administration, as Militates against Religion; and breathes out slaughter

against those who practice it; as in the case of *Darius's Decree*, against *Daniel* in a matter, that concerned the Law of his God, and *Saul's Writ* for the Disciples of Christ at *Damascus*, is far from answering the general end of Government, the good of the People: And therefore is not of God. (p. 34)

Certainly there is nothing in *True Religion*, to oppose civil Government . . . (p. 35)

. . . there should be nothing in *Government*, to hurt Religion: That which God hath Ordained is most friendly unto it, to keep it in Reputation, to protect and support it. (p. 35)

How often is it Observed that men are Prone to act in *Civil*, as they stand Affected in *religious Matters*: i.e. Contrarily (opposite to one another) which hurts the public Interest; but a firm United Regard to the Essentials, of both Religion and good Order, would prevent this Mischief. (p. 42)

How good were *Israels Kings* in their Government, when *good men*? (p. 46)

. . . if all are United in their Regard to Truth, and Right; both Rulers and People, set to / please God and promote the Public Good by doing every one the Duty of his Place; then God will *make their Enemies to be at peace with them*, (a) Then he will *take away* and keep off, *raging sickness*, (b) Afford them his saving Health, with *all manner of Store*, (c) Then he will be their *Defence and Salvation*, (d) *Let Integrity preserve me*, (e) (says David the King) And this preserveth the *Subjects*, as well as the *Princes*: This preserveth and upholdeth *Society*. God is a *Refuge* for his People, (f) And who can reach them in such an *Hiding Place*? He is their *Rock of Defense*, (g) And to what purpose for the Enemy to Batter against such a *strong Rock*, an *House of Defence to Save us*? (h) He is their *High Tower*, (i) And what Enemy can scale such a Tower? *If God be for us, who can be against us*? (k) 'Tis then the greatest Policy of a People to be Honest with God and Man, and Secure the divine Presence with them, which is their Glory, Safety, and Happiness indeed. (p. 46/47)

If the Affair or our *Paper Currency*, &c. come under Your Consideration, let nothing be Transacted by You; but what the Eternal Rules of Righteousness and Goodness will Vindicate You in. (p. 57)

. . . how can the civil Legislature be Clear, if the *public Credit*, a thing so Sacred as the *Faith* of a Community, be in the course of Things most uncertain, which must expose People to Injure & be Injured? *The Current Money with the Merchant* used to be a stable Thing, and has the Sanction of Scripture upon it as such, that People knew what they had, and what to do with it, to answer their Occasions without Injustice to others, or Wrong to themselves. And should not the *Current Money of a Colony* be so too? If our *Weights and Measures* are lessened by long use or worn away a *little* in Time, they should be bro't to the Standard and made strictly Just that People may not be Wrong'd nor do Unjustly in Buying and Selling. And why should not our *Paper-Medium* that is sunk away *much*, be some way bro't to Truth, that we may no / longer be wrong'd by it? Or can there be found no Standard of Justice in this Matter, that poor *Orphans* and *Others* be not turn'd off, with one Half of their Righteous Dues? Verily the Cry of these and other the oppressed will be heard from on High (*pp.* 59/60)

Jonathan Mayhew

May 26, 1751

SUMMARY

BASIS OF HUMAN HOPE LIES IN A SUPREME BEING OF
GOODNESS, WISDOM AND POWER NAMELY IN A PER-
SONAL GOD

Those qualities in any being, which are a just foundation on which to build our hopes, are reducible to the heads of *goodness, wisdom, and power*. (p. 9)

A being that / is averse to the doing of good to us, is certainly unfit to have confidence placed in him for what we want: so also is one that either knows not our wants, or how to relieve them: and he is equally so, who is unable to do it; tho' he had both a disposition for it, and knowledge sufficient to direct his actions. (pp. 9/10)

A *Sermon* preached at *Boston* in *New-England*, May 26, 1751. Occasioned by the much-lamented Death of his Royal Highness *Frederick, Prince of Wales*, &C.&C.&C. By *Jonathan Mayhew, D.D.* pastor of the *West-Church* in *Boston*.

Boston; *New-England*: Printed and Sold by *Richard Draper* in *Newbury-Street*, and *Daniel Gookin*, in *Marlborough-Street*. 1751. 39 pp. Copy in the *New York Public Library*

William Welsteed

May 29, 1751

SUMMARY

REASON AND REVELATION ENDORSE IDEA OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT — CHARACTER OF WHICH IS DETERMINED BY PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION — CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE BEING PREMISED — ARBITRARY RULE FORBIDDEN — APPROACH TO GOD PRELIMINARY — BALANCED POWERS — SUBMISSION — CONTINGENT — CHARTER — CHARACTER OF MAGISTRATES — CURSE OF A PUBLIC DEBT — HONEST MONEY — FAMILY RELIGION

... civil Government is of divine Original. (p. 6)

... civil Government is of divine Authority, or ordained by God . . . (p. 7)

This is also the Voice of Reason, as well as Revelation. (p. 8)

... I would not be understood to mean, that any particular Form or Species of civil Government that has obtain'd in the World, is of divine Institution.—No, this is left to the Wisdom of every Nation or People, to determine for themselves; and therefore must be various, according to the differing Genius, Temper & Customs, Scituation (sic), Policies and Interests of every Country or Common-Wealth. So that, provided they make Choice of that Form which they apprehend most adapted to the Ends of Government among them, it is a Matter of Indifference, and no where prescribed by God, whether the supreme Legislative Power be lodged in the Hands of one Man, or of a few, or of many. (p. 9)

A Sermon preached in the Audience of His Honour Spencer Phips, Esq; Lieutenant-Governour and Commander in Chief, the Honourable His Majesty's Council, and the Honourable House of Representatives, of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, in New-England, May 29th, 1751. Being the Anniversary for the Election of his Majesty's Council for said Province. By William Welsteed, A.M. pastor of a church in Boston. Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland, Printer to the Honourable House of Representatives. MDCCLI. 59 pp.

Copy in the New York Public Library

TEXT OF SERMON: *Psalm 47:9*—"The Princes of the People are gathered together, even the People of the God of Abraham: For the Shields of the Earth belong unto God: He is greatly exalted. —The Shields of the Earth belong unto God."

WILLIAM WELSTEED was born at Boston in 1695, graduated from Harvard 1716 and served Harvard as librarian and tutor until 1728 when he was settled in the New Brick Church. He died in 1753. See Frederick L. Weis: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. p. 219.

. . . whatever the Constitution is, I believe, upon a full, impartial Examination of the Point, it will appear, that all Right, to be sure, the best Right and Title to Power and Rule over / Men, even that which is founded in Conquest, must finally be resolved into Compact, Consent, and Agreement; i.e. the Choice and Election of the Community, or in other Words, of the People (p. 11/12)

It cannot be suppos'd that Men are taken out from among, and raised by God to Seats of Eminence and Superiority above, their Brethren, to govern merely according to their own Will and Humours, and to play the Wanton with the Lives, Liberties & Estates of their Fellow-Creatures: by no Means; they are called to a difficult & laborious Task; not to live/in Ease and Delicacy, but to watch Day and Night for the Good of the Society they have the Charge of; studiously informing themselves of the Laws of Nature & Nations, and the State of the World in general; and making themselves acquainted with the fundamental Interests of their own Country in particular, their Scituation and Circumstances, with Respect to their Neighbors &c. that they may be the more capable of serving their People. (pp. 17/18)

When the Princes or Chiefs of a People, . . . are so sensible that they belong to God, and are appointed by Him . . . / on civil and religious Accounts, that when they are called together to transact the great and weighty Affairs of Government, they make Conscience of assembling together in the House of God, before they enter upon Business, to pay their Homage to the only universal Monarch of the World, acknowledging their absolute Dependence upon Him, for all that Wisdom and Grace which is necessary for them, in order to a right Conduct in their high Station, a faithful and successful Management of the arduous & important Affairs before them: Then it is that the glorious God our Savior is greatly exalted. (pp. 26/27)

. . . the happy Constitution of the civil Government that has obtained there; a Constitution, in which the Prerogative of the Prince, and the Liberty of the Subject, are so widely temper'd and adjusted, that no Nation can be more happy than ours, where the Balance is steadily maintained between them, i.e. the sovereign's just Dominion, and the People's true Liberty. (p. 33)

Their Honour, their Interest, and their All, are embark'd in the same Bottom with that of their People; and they are men that fear God and Honour the King. (p. 34)

Submission to Magistrates is a moral Duty, according to the Law of the fifth Command, & of perpetual Obligation. As they are God's Vicegerents, or Representatives, and act by Authority from Him, for the publick safety and Happiness; and as the People have made Choice of them for this very Purpose; they have an undoubted Right to be obeyed in all their Laws and Orders, not repugnant to the Commands of God. (p. 40)

The Liberty and Privilege, which we enjoy by Virtue of the Royal CHARTER, and which thro' the Favour of an indulgent Providence, we are to this Day in the Exercise of, I mean the Election of Persons to be of Council to his Majesty, is a leading Article, and of such vast Moment and Importance, that on the wise & faithful Improvement / of it, the Happiness of this People does in a great Measure depend; especially, if we consider the great and general Influence they have, in the State, in the Church, and in their Relation to the College: May we never be made to know the Worth of it, by such an Abuse as shall occasion the Loss of it.

—Let the Affair then lie with its proper weight on the Mind of every One concerned in the Elections before you. Suffer none to trifle and play with a Point of so serious a Nature. (pp. 46/47)

They must be Men of Capacity, wise and understanding, i.e. who know the World, Men, and Things; the Constitution, the civil and religious Interests of their Country; of a Genius for Government, of real, exemplary Vertue and Religion; of inflexible Integrity, who dare to be honest in all Times; act, vote and advise, agreeable to the inward Sentiments of their Souls, in every Case; undaunted by Frowns on one Hand, and Clamours on the other; not of a mean and sordid, selfish & worldly Spirit, / but of a truly generous and public Spirit: In a Word, Men who are known to be such, tried Men, and generally approved of. (pp. 48/49)

. . . I am now to Congratulate my native Country, that thro' the special Favour of GOD in his governing Providence, you are delivered from a Load of Debt, which would have been too heavy for you or you Children to bear.

And may it not be spoken to the Honour of the Legislators

of the three last Years, if I mistake not, that they have in the most mature and deliberate Manner, been consulting & endeavoring to bring into Execution, a Method for using and improving this great Bounty of Heaven, as a Means of extricating the Province from that Injustice, Perplexity & Confusion in the Trade and Dealing, which are the necessary and unavoidable Consequences of an uncertain, depreciating Medium. (p. 52)

. . . a criminal Remisness in Family Worship, Instruction and Government, as much as to any one Thing whatever, is owing that dreadful Defection & Degeneracy in the rising Age, that rudeness & dissoluteness of Manners manifestly prevalent among our Children and Youth, which affords but a melancholy Prospect of future Times. (p. 57)

Isaac Skillman

Issac Skillman, December 2, 1772

SUMMARY

THE PERMANENT VAILIDITY OF CHARTERS—EQUAL RIGHT TO LIBERTY BELONGS TO ALL WITHIN THE SPHERE OF EACH — EARL OF DARTMOUTH'S LETTER TO GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND CRITICIZED FOR "DICTATIONS" "DIRECTIONS" "POSITIVE COMMANDS TO OPPRESS WITH TYRANNY" — THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH'S PERSONAL CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY NO BAR TO CRITICISM OF HIS PUBLIC ACTS — INVOCATION OF THE LAW OF HENRY VIII PROTESTED — EXISTING COURTS SUFFICIENT FOR ALL CASES — APPEAL FROM THE MINISTRY IN PARLIAMENT TO THE KING AND CROWN — FOUNTAIN OF POWER LIES WITH THE PEOPLE — MAGISTRATES ARE TRUSTEES — THE PEOPLE MAY RESUME DELEGATED AUTHORITY WHEN IT IS ABUSED — RIGHT TO RESIST USURPATION ASSERTED — REBELS DEFINED — ILLEGAL ACTIONS MAY BE AFFIXED TO RULERS AS WELL AS TO RULED — RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE DECLARED — AMERICANS NEVER WERE IN BONDAGE TO ANY MAN — AMERICANS HAVE A RIGHT TO UNITE FOR THEIR LIBERTIES BY THE LAW OF GOD OF NATURE AND OF NATIONS — THEY WILL NOT SUBMIT TO BE SLAVES — LOVE OF KING AND MOTHERLAND CANNOT BAR THEM FROM THEIR RIGHTS — "LIBERTY IS THE LIFE OF LIFE" — "IT IS THE FINISHED WORK OF HEAVEN" — THE DARING INNOVATION OF MAKING JUDGES DEPENDENT ON THE BRITISH MINISTRY — JUDGES HAVE THE KEY TO THE LAWS — ACCUMULATED GRIEVANCES WILL BRING THEIR TERRIBLE REWARD — THE RIGHT TO FREEDOME COMES NOT FROM KINGS BUT FROM HEAVEN — STANDING RIGHTS NO REBELLION

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Dartmouth.

My Lord,

When I view the original right, power, and *Charter* confirmed, sealed, and ratified to the province, or inhabitants of

AN ORATION ON THE BEAUTIES OF LIBERTY, or the Essential Rights of the Americans. Delivered at the Second Baptist Church in Boston, upon the last Annual Thanksgiving, Dec. 3d, 1772. Dedicated to the Right Honorable the Earl of Dartmouth. Published by the earnest Request of many. The Third Edition, carefully corrected by the Author, in which are many additions, particularly those four pages which were left out of the last Editions. With some Strictures on the Eternal Right of Mankind, Liberty of Conscience. And Remarks on the Rights and Liberties of the

Americans, inserted by particular Desire. By a British Bostonian. Boston: N. E. Printed and Sold by E. Russell, next the Cornfield, Union-street, near the Market. MDCCLXXIII. 80 pp. Copy in the Dartmouth College Library.

ISAAC SKILLMAN was born in New Jersey in 1740, graduated from Princeton 1766 and served Baptist churches in Boston and Salem, N. J. Brown gave him the degree of D.D. in 1798. He died in 1799. See Frederick L. Weiss: *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, Lancaster, Mass., 1936. p. 188.

Rhode-Island, and its standing in full force, and unrepealed for more than an hundred years; surely your Lordship will not blame them, if they stand fast in the Liberty wherein they were made free: The words of their Charter are, "Be it enacted, that no freeman, shall be taken, or imprisoned, or deprived of his freehold, or liberty, or free custom, or be out-lawed, or exiled, or otherwise destroyed; nor shall be oppressed, judged, or condemned, but by the laws of this colony.—And that no man, of what state or condition soever, shall be put out of his lands or tenements, nor taken, nor imprisoned, nor disinherited, nor BANISHED (observe this my Lord) nor any way destroyed, or molested, without being, for it, brought to answer, by a due course of law of this COLONY."

As a fly, or a worm, by the law of nature, have as great a right to Liberty and Freedom, (according to their little sphere in life) as the most potent monarch upon earth: And as there can be no essential difference between your Lordship and myself in the kingdom of Liberty, but what is political, I therefore, without any further apology, take leave to ask you Lordship, Whether any one that fears God and loves his neighbor as himself, (which is the true scripture-mark of a Christian) will OPPRESS his fellow-creatures? If he does, where are the beauties of christianity? Not to be seen in this life, however they may be in the next./

I have seen an authenticated copy of your Lordship's letter to the Governor of *Rhode-Island*, in which are such DICTATIONS, DIRECTIONS, and positive COMMANDS, to oppress with tyranny, a *free people*, as are inconsistent with a good man or a Christian to have any concern or agency in. The law of God directs us to do unto others, as we would they should do unto us. And knowing that your Lordship is well acquainted with the divine oracles, having had the honor to dine at your Lordship's seat in *Staffordshire*; and being, when in *England*, personally acquainted with Mr. *Wright*, your Lordship's Steward, and with the good and pious character which your Lordship bears, with submission to a person in your exalted station, may I take leave (as a fellow-christian, as one that loves, as the highest happiness of his existence, the *beauties, spirit*, and LIFE of *christianity*) to ask whether your Lordship would like to have an *Englishman's* birth-right, Liberty and / Freedom taken away by his King, or Ministry, or both? Would not your Lordship immediately

say, it is tyranny, oppression, and destruction, by a despotic power? Would not your Lordship be ready to alarm the nation, and point out the political happiness of the people upon the eve of destruction? (pp. v-viii)

Your Lordship lets us know that the case of burning the *Gaspee Schooner* has been laid before the Law Servants of the Crown, and that they make the crime of a deeper dye than piracy; namely, "an act of high treason, and levying a war against the King."

My Lord, supposing this to be the case, are not the *Rhode-Islanders* subjects to the King of *Great-Britain*? Has not the King his Attorney and Courts of Judicature to decide matters between the King and the subjects? Why then must there be new Courts of Admiralty erected to appoint and order the inhabitants to be confined and dragged away three thousand miles from their families, from their laws, rights, and liberties to be tried by their enemies? Do you think, my Lord, this is right in the sight of God and man? If the *Rhode-Islanders* suffer this infringement of their liberties, granted them by their Charter from the King of *England*, let them never complain of any hardships they may suffer from any tyranny: For was there ever such cruelty, injustice, and barbarity united against a free people before? and my Lord *Dartmouth* to direct in this matter! from whom we might have expected mildness, mercy, and a defence of the rights and liberties of the people.

Your Lordship's letter frequently/reminds us that this destructive authority to deprive the people of their invaluable privileges, is his Majesty's will and pleasure. How far his Majesty may be influenced and dictated by his Ministry I will not take upon me to say; but surely his Majesty is a person of more tenderness and understanding than to aim of his own heart at such tyranny: Besides, his attempting to infringe the Rights of the people on a bare supposition of offence at once destroys his Right, on revolution principles, to reign over them as their King: For, according to his coronation oath, he has no longer a right to the *British* Crown or Throne, than he maintains inviolably firm the Laws and Rights of the people. (pp. ix-xi)

Besides, me good Lord, the inhabitants of *America* know as well as the people of *England*, that the right and fountain of power and authority originate in THEM as the seat of Majesty, the authors of laws, and the creators of officers to

execute them: And if at any time they shall find the the (sic.) power they have conferred, abused by their TRUSTEES; their MAJESTY violated by tyranny or usurpation; their authority prostituted to support violence, or skreen *corruption*; the laws grown pernicious through accidents unforeseen, or rendered ineffectual through their infidelity: Then it is their RIGHT (and what is their right is undoubtedly their privilege) and duty and their essential Power and Majesty, to resume that delegated authority which they intrusted them with, and call their trustees to an ACCOUNT; to resist the usurpation, and extirpate the tyranny; to restore their injured Right and essential MAJESTY, and their prostituted AUTHORITY; to suspend, alter, or abrogate those laws; and punish the unfaithful and corrupt officers. (pp. xii-xiii)

What is rebellion, my Lord? If I understand it right, Rebels are persons rising up, with an assumed authority and power to act, dictate, and rule, in direct violation to the laws of the land. I believe, my Lord, I am right, for this reason, because your G--- F---G, and your G---r T---N, when in *North-Carolina*, thought so; and like cruel, blood-thirsty *savages*, murdered mankind for uniting to oppose that bloody power who attempted to destroy their LIVES and LIBERTIES. This was, my Lord, a cruel barbarous slaughter of mankind.—However, if it was deemed rebellion in them, and they were treated as *rebels*, because they (as the ministry said) broke the laws of the government / of the Province. Then surely it follows, that the K--g, M----y, and P----t are *Rebels* to GOD and mankind, in attempting to overthrow, by guns, by swords, and by the power of war) the laws and government of *Rhode-Island*. Have not the *Rhode-Islanders* as much right to the privileges of their own laws, as the King of *England* has to his Crown? Sure they have, Then surely that man must be a Tyrant in his soul that deems it rebellion in the *Rhode-Islanders* if they kill every man that attempts to destroy their lives, laws, rights, or liberties. (pp. xv-xvi)

My Lord, the *Americans* have a privilege to boast of above all the world: They never were in bondage to any man, therefore it is more for them to give up their RIGHTS, than it would be for all Europe to give up their LIBERTIES into the hands of the *Turks*. (p. xix)

But it may be meet to let your Lordship know, that if the

Americans unite (as there seems a good prospect) to / stand, as a *band of brethren* for their Liberties. They have a right, by the law of God, of nature, and of nations, to reluct at, and even to resist any military or marine force. . . . And you will find, my Lord, that the *Americans* will not submit to be SLAVES: They know the use of the gun, and the military art / as well as any of his Majesty's troops at *St. James's*: And where his Majesty has one soldier, America can produce fifty free men, and all volunteers; and raise a more potent army of men in three weeks, than *England* can in three years. But God forbid that I should be thought to aim at rousing the *Americans* to arms, without their rights, liberties, and oppression call for it. For they are unwilling to beat to arms: As loyal subjects they love their King: They love their Mother-Country: They call it their HOME, and wish nothing more than the prosperity of *Britain*, and the glory of their King. But they will not give up their rights, nor be slaves to any power upon earth. (pp. xxvi-xxviii)

Liberty, my dear Hearers, is the life of life, it is the soul of man, the breath of the divine Being—Liberty, it shines with the light of / the morning—the rising Sun, as the herald of Heaven proclaims it—Angels adore it—sun, moon, and stars in their course praise it. The Heavens sing of it—the worm seeks it—fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy winds and raging seas, waves and billows, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and cedars, beasts and the cattle upon a thousand hills, the waving corn and flying fowl, in the Heavens aloud declare it, and all the trees of the field, says the Prophet, clap their hands. LIBERTY! who would not prize it? Who would not adore it? It is the finished work of Heaven! the glory of omnipotence! the majesty of a God! the display of his power, wisdom, and perfection. All nature bespeaks it! and the whole Creation, in its primeval state celebrates its praise. (pp. 29/30)

For a more bold, daring innovation upon your right of power, decision and determination by your own laws, respecting your liberty and property between man and man, between the Crown of *England*, and the Rights of *America* cannot possibly be made . . . than to make your Judges dependent upon the *British* Ministry. It is in effect, giving up your right to all you have, to all that you / or your children can ever possess. For the possession of a person's right, whether hereditary, or by purchase, depends much upon the determi-

nation of the Judges. And if the Judges are wholly to be dependent upon the Crown of England, for nomination and support then you may easily judge whose servants and slaves you are to be: *His servant ye are*, says St. Paul, *whom ye obey*. The Judges have the key of the laws, the hearts of the *Lawyers*, and the power of *Juries* much in their own hands. But the lives of the people, the rights of the subject, and the disposal of their property was originally intended to be determined by *Juries* ONLY: And as the Judges have assumed by custom, a power of dictating to Lawyers even at the *bar*, and directing the *Jury* . . . (pp. 49/50)

The Parliament of *England* cannot justly make any laws to tax the *Americans*; for they are not the Representatives of *America*; and therefore they are no legislative power of *America*. The House of Lords cannot do it, for they are Peers of England, not of *America*; and if neither King, Lords, nor Commons have any right to oppress or destroy the Liberties of the *Americans*, why is it then that the *Americans* do not stand upon their own strength, and shew their power and importance, when the life of life, and every Liberty that is dear to them is in danger?/

Therefore, let me advise you with all the power of affection, with all the pathos of soul, (as one who esteems the full possession of Rights of the *Americans*, as the highest blessing of this life) to stand alarmed. See your danger—death is near—destruction is at the door.—Need I speak? Are not your harbours blockaded from you? Your castle secured by captives—your lives destroyed—revenues imposed upon you—taxation laid—military power oppressing—your *CHARTER violated*—your Governor pensioned—your constitution declining—your Liberties departing, and not content with this, they now attack the *life*, the soul and *capitol* of all your Liberties, to create your Judges, and make them independent upon you for office or support, and erect new Courts of Admiralty, to take away by violence, the husband from his family, his wife, his home, his friends. Such cruelty and tyranny ought ever to be held in the most hateful contempt, the same as you would a *banditti of slave-makers on the coast of Africa*. (pp. 60/61)

A right to the blessing of freedom, we do not receive from Kings, but from Heaven, as the breath of life, and essence of our being? Do not the birds of the air expand their

wings? The fish of the sea their fins? and the worms of the earth turn again when they are trod upon? And shall this be deemed rebellion? Heaven forbid! Shall *Naboth's* disputing with King *Ahab*, respecting his vineyard, be deemed rebellion? Or the people sending home their Goverour (sic.) in irons some years ago, be deemed rebellion? It is no more rebellion for the people to stand up for, and maintain their rights than it is to breath in the free air. (p. 63)

John Witherspoon

May 17, 1776

SUMMARY

WIDENESS OF PROVIDENCE — FACING A HARD CONTEST — "GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY HIS WONDERS TO PERFORM" — FREEMAN'S MAIDEN POWER — THE CONSISTENT MISCARRIAGE OF ENEMY HOPES — "NAVIES MELT AWAY" — THE AMERICAN CONFEDERACY — RELIGIOUS LIBERTY NEVER SURVIVES CIVIL LIBERTY — SELF-GOVERNMENT ONLY TOLERABLE CONDITION — CALMNESS OF MIND ON RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES REMARKABLE TRAIT IN STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL LIBERTY — EVEN GOOD GOVERNMENT ULTIMATELY FALLS WHEN MORALS DECAY — REALITY OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTION BEST DEMONSTRATED BY ABILITY TO WORK WITH A "TRULY HOLY PERSON" OF ANOTHER DENOMINATION — "DIGNITY IN VIRTUE ENTITLED TO AUTHORITY" — INDUSTRY — FRUGALITY

The doctrine of divine providence is very full and complete in the sacred oracles. It extends not only to things / which we may think of great moment, and therefore worthy of notice, but to things the most indifferent and inconsiderable—the most impetuous and disorderly passions of men, that are under no restraint from themselves, are yet perfectly subject to the dominion of Jehovah. They carry his commission, they obey his orders, they are limited and restrained by his authority, and they conspire with everything else in promoting his glory. There is the greater need to take notice of this, that men are not generally sufficiently aware of the distinction between the law of God and his purpose; they

THE DOMINION OF PROVIDENCE OVER THE PASSIONS OF MEN: a Sermon preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May 1776. Being the General Fast appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. Dedicated to the Hon. John Hancock, Esq. President of the Congress of the United States of America. To which is added, an Address to the natives of Scotland residing in America (The works of the Rev. John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D., etc. Philadelphia, 1800, vol. II, pp. 407-450). Text of Sermon: "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*" Psalm 76:10

JOHN WITHERSPOON was born in the Parish of Yester, Scotland in 1722. From 1736 to 1743 he was at the University of Edinburgh when he was licensed as a minister. His best known charge in Scotland was at Paisley from which he was called to the presidency of the College of New Jersey in 1768. He died at Princeton in 1794. Just a century later James McCosh was called from Great Britain to the presidency of Princeton in 1868 where he remained until 1894. See William B. Sprague: *Annals of the American Pulpit*, New York, 1858. Vol. III, pp. 288-300.

are apt to suppose, that as the temper of the sinner is contrary to the one, so the outrages of the sinner are able to defeat the other; than which nothing can be more false. (pp. 407/408)

This psalm—was composed after the victory was obtained; whereas we are now but putting on the harness, and entering upon an important contest, the length of which it is impossible to foresee, and the issue of which it will perhaps be thought presumption to foretell. But as the truth, with respect to God's moral government, is the same and unchangeable—our duty and interest conspire in calling upon us to improve it. And I have chosen to insist upon it on this day of solemn humiliation, as it will probably help us to a clear and explicit view of what should be the chief subject of our prayers and endeavours, as well as the great object of our hope and trust, in our present situation—to apply it more particularly to the present state of the American Colonies, and the plague of war,—‘The ambition of mistaken princes, the cunning and cruelty of oppressive and corrupt ministers, and even the inhumanity of brutal soldiers—shall firmly promote the glory of God’—it is my intention through the assistance of divine grace—to apply these principles to our present situation. (pp. 409/410)

We have a remarkable instance of the influence of small circumstances in providence in the English history. The two most remarkable persons in the civil wars, had earnestly desired to withdraw themselves from the contentions of the times, Mr. Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. They had actually taken their passage in a ship for New-England, when by an arbitrary order of council they were compelled to remain at home—the violent persecution in England—drove—some of the American settlements, particularly those in New-England—(where) they continue themselves in as great a degree of purity of faith and strictness of practice—than is to be found in any protestant church now in the world./ Lest this should be thought a temporizing compliment to the people of New-England, who have been the first sufferers in the present contest, and have set so noble an example of invincible fortitude, in withstanding the violence of oppression, I think it proper to observe that the whole paragraph is copied from a sermon—prepared and preached in Scotland, in the month of August, 1758. (p. 420/421)

How many discoveries have been made of the designs of enemies in Britain and among ourselves—what surpassing success has attended our encounters in almost every instance—has not the boasted discipline of regular and veteran soldiers been turned into confusion and dismay, before the new and maiden courage of freemen, in defense of their property and right/ —the signal advantage we have gained from the evacuation of Boston, and the shameful flight of the army and navy of Britain, was brought about without the loss of a man—I believe I may say with truth, that there is hardly any step which they have taken, but it has operated strongly against themselves and been more in our favor than if they had followed a contrary course—While we give praise to God—let us guard against—boasting—it has given me great uneasiness to read some ostentatious vaunting expressions in our news papers, though happily I think, much restrained of late / —I was well pleased with a remark—thirty years ago in a pamphlet, Britain's Remembrancer, in which it was observed that there was a great deal of profane ostentation in the names given to ships of war as the Victory, the Valiant, the Thunderer, the Dreadnought, the Terrible, the Firebrand, the Furnace, the Lightning, the Infernal, and many more of the same kind—I cannot help observing that the Victory often celebrated as the finest ship ever built in Britain, was lost in the night without a storm, by some unknown accident and about twelve hundred persons, many of them of the first families in the nation, were buried with it in the deep./

Some have observed that true religion, and in her train dominion, riches, literature, and arts, have taken their course in a slow and gradual manner, from east to west since the earth was settled after the flood, and from thence forebode the future glory of America. I leave this as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty, but observe, that if your cause is just,—if your principles are pure,—and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts.—You are my witness, that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season, however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, I am satisfied

that the confederacy of the colonies, has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition, but of a deep and general conviction, that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the temporal and eternal happiness of us and our posterity depended on the issue.—/ There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage.—I call this claim unjust of making laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever, because they are separated from us, independent of us, and have an interest in opposing us. Would any man who could prevent it, give up his estate, persons, and family, to the disposal of his neighbor, although he had liberty to chuse the wisest and the best master? Surely not. This is the true and proper hinge of the controversy between Great Britain and America./ If, on account of their distance . . . they could not conduct their own quarrel with propriety for one year, how can they give direction and vigor to every department of our civil constitutions from age to age?/ In general, there has been so great a degree of public spirit, that we have much more reason to be thankful for its vigor and prevalence, than to wonder at the few appearances of dishonesty or disaffection.—Nor was there ever perhaps in history so general a commotion from which religious differences have been so entirely excluded—if to the justice of your cause and the purity of your principles, you add prudence in your conduct, there will be the greatest reason to hope, by the blessing of God, for prosperity and success—I have chiefly in view union, firmness and patience. Every body must perceive the absolute necessity of union/ —How often has a just cause been reduced to the lowest ebb, and yet when firmly adhered to, has become finally triumphant—the blessing of God is only to be looked for by those who are not wanting in the discharge of their own duty— /

Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy . . . of manners makes a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue—/ I do not wish you to oppose any body's religion but every body's wickedness. Perhaps there are few surer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himself more joined in spirit

to a truly holy person of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own—/ There is a dignity in virtue which is entitled to authority, and ought to claim it./ Industry—is a moral duty of the greatest moment, absolutely necessary to national prosperity, and the sure way of obtaining the blessing of God—Industry brings up a firm and hardy race/—Suffer me to recommend to you frugality in your families, and every other article of expense—/ I beseech you to make a wise improvement of the present threatening aspect of public affairs, and to remember that your duty to God, to your country, to your families, and to yourselves, is the same.—God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable. (pp. 423-436)

John Witherspoon

September 5, 1776

SUMMARY

NO COMPROMISE ON PRINCIPLE — LORD HOWE'S PROPOSAL MARKED BY EVERY SIGN OF HUMILIATION FOR AMERICA — INDEPENDENCE A FACT — DRIFT OF WAR NOT THE TEST OF RIGHT AND WRONG — BRITAIN'S OWN EXPERIENCE IN SCOTLAND — JULY 4, 1776 MARKED A POSITION NOT TO BE DISCOUNTED

From the conduct of the Ministry at home, from the acts of Parliament, and from Lord Howe's proclamation in conformity to both, it is plain that absolute, unconditional submission is what they require us to agree to, or mean to force us to. And from the most authentick private intelligence, the King has not laid aside his personal rancour; it is rather increasing every day. In these circumstances Lord Howe has evidently a great desire to engage us in a treaty; and yet he has constantly avoided giving up the least punctilio on his side. He could never be induced to give General Washington his title. He plainly tells us he cannot treat with Congress as such; but he has allowed a prisoner of war to come and tell us he would be glad to see us as private gentlemen. . . . Let us ask what benefit shall be derived from it? There is none yet shown to be possible. It has been admitted by every person without exception who has spoke, that we are not to admit a thought of giving up the independence we have so lately declared; and by the greatest part, if not the whole, that there is not the least reason to expect that any correspondence we can have with him will tend to peace. Yet I think in the beginning of the debate such resonings were used as seemed to me only to conclude that we should grasp at it as a means of peace. We were told that it was easy for us to boast or be valiant here, but that our armies were running away before our enemies. I never loved boasting, neither here nor anywhere else. I look upon it as almost a certain forerunner of disgrace. I found my hope of success in this cause, not in the

valour of Americans or the cowardice of Britons, but upon the justice of the cause, and still more upon the nature of things. . . . Lord Howe speaks of a decisive blow not being yet struck, as if this cause depended upon one battle, which could not be avoided. Sir, this is a prodigious mistake. We may fight no battles at all for a long time, or we may lose some battles, as was the case with the British themselves in the Scotch rebellion of 1745, and the cause notwithstanding be the same. I wish it were considered, that neither loss nor disgrace worth mentioning has befallen us in the late engagement, nor comparable to what the British troops have often suffered. At the battle of Preston (September 21, 1745), sir, they broke to pieces and ran away like sheep, before a few Highlanders. I myself saw them do the same thing at Falkirk (January 17, 1746), with very little difference—a small part only of the army making a stand, and in a few hours the whole retreating with precipitation before their enemies. Did that make any difference with the cause? Not in the least—so long as the body of the nation were determined, on principle, against the rebels. . . . we are absolutely certain from . . . Lord Howe's own explicit declaration . . . that he never will acknowledge the independence of the American States. . . . in the beginning of July, with the universal approbation of all the States now united, we renounced this connection, and declared ourselves free and independent. Shall we bring this into question again?

SPEECH OF JOHN WITHERSPOON in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, September 5, 1776? *Journal of the Continental Congress*, Vol. 6, pp. 1109-1113. (Library of Congress, Washington, 1906)

Thursday, September 5, 1776 . . . The Congress then resumed the consideration of the report of the Board of War; and thereupon, *Resolved*, That General Sullivan be requested to inform Lord Howe, that this Congress, being representatives of the free and independent states of America, cannot, with propriety, send any of its members to confer with his lordship in their private characters; but that, ever desirous of establishing peace on reasonable terms, they will send a committee of their body to know whether he has any authority to treat with persons authorized by Congress for that purpose, in behalf of America, and what that authority is, and to hear

such propositions as he shall think fit to make respecting the same. That the president be desired to write to General Washington, and acquaint him that it is the opinion of Congress, that no proposals for making peace between Great Britain and the United States of America ought to be received or attended to, unless the same be made in writing, and addressed to the representatives of the said states in Congress, or persons authorized by them: And, if application be made to him by any of the commanders of the British forces on that subject, that he inform them that these United States, who entered into the war only for the defence of their lives and liberties, will cheerfully agree to peace on reasonable terms, whenever such shall be proposed to them in manner aforesaid. (*Journal of Congress*, Vol. 5, p. 737. Library of Congress, 1906)

"Early on the morning of Saturday, the 21st of September, Charles marshalled his forces. The MacDonalds were on the right wing—they deemed the position theirs by heritage, alleging that Bruce assigned them that station at Bannockburn—the Stewarts and Camerons were on the left, the MacGregors and the Duke of Perth's men formed the centre. The Atholl men, the Robertsons, the MacDonalds of Glencoe, and the MacLaughlans were the rearguard. Gardiner's Dragoons on the right and Hamilton's on the left, with the foot regiments between was Cope's formation. Long before thee ast harr had lifted from

the low-lying morass that divided the armies, the Highlanders were in motion. Led by a gentleman named Anderson—a sportsman intimately acquainted with the ground, a son of Anderson of Whitburgh of Humbie—the clansmen crept forward in silence. The dense mist shrouded their movements, and before the enemy was aware they were upon them. A complete debacle followed the attack, none of the royalist troops showing steadiness enough to make the battle a series of successive movements." T. C. F. Brotchie, F. S. A. (Scot.) *The Battlefields of Scotland*, New York 1913. pp. 218-219.

William White, George Duffield
and
John Witherspoon

SUMMARY

THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS RECOMMENDS THE BIBLE
TO THE NATION IN AN EDITION PRINTED IN PHILA-
DELPHIA.

Gentlemen: Agreeably to your Desire, we have paid Attention to Mr. Robert Aitken's Impression of the holy Scriptures of the old & new Testament. Having selected & examined a Variety of Passages throughout the Work, we are of the Opinion, that it is executed with great Accuracy as to the Sense, & with as few grammatical & typographical Errors as could be expected in an Undertaking of such Magnitude. Being ourselves Witnesses of the Demand for this Invaluable Book, we rejoice in the present Prospect of a Supply; hoping that it will prove as advantageous as it is honourable, to the Gentleman who has exerted himself to furnish it, at the evident risque of private Fortune. We are, Gentlemen, Your very respectful & humble Servants. William White, George Duffield.

Ms in the National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington. Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 19, Volume 1.

Endorsed: Philada. Sep. 10, 1782. Hon. James Duane, Esq., Chairman & the other hon'l Gentlemen of the Committee of Congress on Mr. Aitken's Memorial.

The Committee to whom was referred the Petition of Robert Aitken Printer Dated Jany 21st 1781, respecting an Edition of the Holy Scriptures beg leave to report:

That Mr. Aitken has at great Expense now finished an American Edition of the Holy Scriptures in English; that the Committee have from Time to Time attended to his Progress in the Work; That they also recommended it to the two Chaplains of Congress (The Rev. William White and the Rev. George Duffield) to examine and give their Opinion of the Execution, who have accordingly reported thereon: the Recommendation and Report being as follows: The Committee therefore submit the following Resolution.

September 12, 1782

Resolved, that the United States in Congress assembled highly approves the pious & laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the Interest of Religion as well as an Instance of the Progress of Art, in this Country, and being satisfied from the above Report of his care & accuracy in the Execution of the Work, they recommend this Edition of the Bible to the Inhabitants of the United States & hereby authorize him to publish this Recommendation in the Manner he shall think proper.

Ms in the National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 19, Volume 1. Endorsed "Report of W. Duane, W. McKean, W. (sic) Witherspoon on a mem'l of Robert Aitken, Read September 12, 1782, Passed." The report is in the writing of Witherspoon. See Journals of Congress, September 12, 1782 (Journals of Congress on Mr. Aitken's Memorial. of the Continental Congress, Vol. 23, p. 574n Library of Congress, 1914)

GEORGE DUFFIELD was born at Pequea, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1732. He graduated from Nassau Hall (Princeton) in 1752, and was tutor there from 1754 to 1756, when he became pastor at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He later came to the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. In 1777 he became a chaplain to the Continental Congress. He died in Philadelphia in 1790. See William B. Sprague: Annals of the American Pulpit. Vol III, pp. 186-192.

WILLIAM WHITE was born at Philadelphia in 1748 (Old Style), graduated from the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) 1765. He was ordained pries by Dr. Richard Terrick, the Bishop at London in 1772. He returned to Philadelphia as an associate to Dr. Peters at Christ Church and St. Peter's. He offered prayers for the King and Royal Family until the Sunday after July 4, 1776, after which he ceased to do so. He became a chaplain to the Continental Congress in 1777. In 1786 John Adams, then Ambassador to the Court of St. James presented William White to the Archbishop of Canterbury and later White was consecrated Bishop at Lambeth in 1787. He returned to the United States where he continued his influential life until his death in 1836. See William B. Sprague: Annals of the American Pulpit. Vol. V, pp. 280-292.

